

8 deportees permitted to return

AMMAN (AP) — Israel has given permission for eight more Palestinian deportees to return to their homes in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip, a Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) official said. It would be the third batch of Palestinian deportees to be allowed home since April and comes as a result of negotiations between Israel and the PLO since the launching of the Middle East peace process in September 1991. They will travel to the occupied territories from Jordan next week, but no days has been set, said Omar Khathib, deputy chief of the PLO mission in Amman. Nearly 80 deportees returned home in two earlier groups. Mr. Khathib said the latest batch of eight were part of a group of 80 Palestinians Israel has tentatively agreed to allow to return home. The Palestinians have been living in Jordan. Mr. Khathib identified them as: Othman Dawoud, Jamal Jbara, Hamal Halouk, Issam Al Rababi, Mohammad Al Moutawwir, Jamal Abu Latif, Noureddin Al Jaabari and Mohammad Amin Al Jagbari.



Hamas: Israel arrested more than 2,700

DAMASCUS (AFP) — The Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, said Saturday the Israeli army arrested more than 2,700 Palestinians in the last two weeks, but added its members would still continue to attack Israel. These arrests "which affect all those suspected of links to Hamas will not prevent more operations by the armed wing" Izzedine Al Qassam nor the popular resistance against Israeli occupation, Hamas said in a statement to AFP here. Palestinian sources in the occupied territories have said that the Israeli army had arrested more than 500 activists in a bid to destroy the group after several attacks that claimed the lives of 14 Israelis this month. The mass roundup "comes at a time when the enemy government prepares to release thousands of prisoners who don't belong to Hamas in a bid to divide the Palestinian people," it said. Israel is to set free around 5,000 prisoners after the signing of a final deal to launch autonomy in the Gaza Strip and West Bank town of Jericho, which may take place in May. Israeli negotiators have rejected requests to set free members of groups opposed to peace.

Volume 18 Number 5595

AMMAN SUNDAY, APRIL 24, 1994, THU AL QE'DEH 13, 1414

Price: Jordan 150 Fils

Regent visits army unit

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, on Saturday visited troops of the Third Royal Armoured Division, watched exercises and was briefed on the training programmes. The Regent also inspected troops conducting maintenance of military equipment and met commanders and officers.

Iraq to press for timing of end to U.N. sanctions

BAGHDAD (R) — Iraq will press a senior U.N. envoy due to visit Baghdad this weekend to give a timetable for the easing or lifting of U.N. sanctions, diplomats said Saturday. Rolf Ekeus, chairman of the U.N. Special Commission on Iraq, is due to arrive in Iraq on Sunday at the invitation of Deputy Prime Minister Tareq Aziz, U.N. sources said. It will be his second visit this year. "The Iraqis will press Ekeus for a timetable to have the sanctions eased or lifted," a diplomat said. "The embargo has inflicted tremendous harm on the Iraqi people and caused... miseries which cannot be accepted under any circumstances," the ruling Baath Party newspaper Al Thawra said in a commentary. "Iraq has honoured its commitment and political... pledges as far as Security Council resolutions are concerned," it added (see page 2).

Kabul fighting leaves 158 injured

KABUL (AFP) — At least 158 people were injured in an overnight battle that erupted in Kabul between rival forces fighting for and against President Burhanuddin Rabbani, officials said here Saturday. Troops exchanged artillery and heavy weapons fire during the clash, but government troops said they had "repulsed" the renegade fighters of Afghan Prime Minister Gulbuddin Hekmatyar. They also claimed that "heavy casualties" were inflicted on the troops of Mr. Hekmatyar and Uzbek fighters of militia warlord Abdul Rashid Dostum, the premier's main battle ally. Mr. Hekmatyar's Shiite ally, the Hezb-e-Wahdat faction, also joined the battle, engaging Mr. Rabbani's troops at the city's south, the government troops said.

Egyptian president visits UAE

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak arrived in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) on Saturday for talks with President Sheikh Zayed Ben Sultan Al Nahayan, the official news agency WAM reported. It gave no further details of the visit but Egypt and the UAE have been involved in mediation to end Yemen's political crisis. Two Egyptian and UAE ministers met separately with Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh and his rival, Vice President Ali Salim Al Beidi in Sanaa and Aden this month and gave letters from their leaders. They later reported progress and another Egyptian delegation will go to Yemen soon. "There will be a visit to Yemen by an Egyptian delegation soon but its date has not been set yet," Egyptian Ambassador in Sanaa, Ataa Harun, was quoted on Saturday as saying by the UAE magazine Al Shuruq. Mr. Mubarak earlier met Sultan Qaboos during a visit to Oman, which has brought the Yemeni leaders together but failed to end the impasse.

Iranians attack U.N. offices in Tehran

NICOSIA (AP) — Demonstrators Saturday pelted the U.N. building in Tehran with stones and eggs and burned the U.S. flag to protest international inaction on Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) reported. But the U.N. resident coordinator in Tehran, Michael Schuleenburg, the only foreign staffer in the office at the time, told the Associated Press by phone that the "demonstration was very small

Syria welcomes Rabin comments on settlements as step for peace

DAMASCUS (Agencies) — Syria on Saturday welcomed Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's offer to dismantle Jewish settlements on the Golan Heights as a step forward but said peace was impossible without a full withdrawal from the Golan.

The official Syrian newspaper Tishreen, referring to remarks by Mr. Rabin on Thursday that he would evacuate settlements for the sake of peace, urged him to turn his words into deeds.

"We could say that a step was made by Rabin when he recognised the necessity of dismantling settlements and that peace, not settlements, would provide security," Tishreen said.

It added: "... Rabin knows well that peace with Syria is impossible without the return of the whole Golan..."

Mr. Rabin, who as Israeli army chief seized the Golan Heights during the 1967 Middle East war, said he would dismantle Jewish settlements there, in return for peace. He stopped short of Syria's demand for full Israeli withdrawal from the Golan.

Mr. Rabin told reporters Friday that dismantling settlements was inevitable and he hinted that it would happen in the West Bank and Gaza Strip as well as the Golan Heights.

"Once we'll reach an agreement about peace treaties with an Arab country or some Arab factor, then the issue will be brought up," he said.

Mr. Rabin had said Thursday that he was ready to dismantle settlements on the Golan heights for peace with Syria, his first explicit commitment to moving settlers.

Palestinian spokesmen said they were pleased, even though Mr. Rabin had confined his remarks to negotiations with Syria.

On Friday, Mr. Rabin went further, saying settlement was impossible wherever Israel evacuated.

"Whichever areas we decide to vacate for peace, I will not ask the Israeli settlers to stay there," he said.

Israel and the PLO are close to signing an agreement that will introduce limited Palestinian self-rule in the Gaza Strip

(Continued on page 5)

Self-rule talks in decisive week

TUNIS (Agencies) — Talks on Palestinian self-rule in the occupied territories enter a crucial week on Sunday with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) saying the onus is on Israel to supply responses or issues obstructing the path to a deal.

And while PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat has spoken of the drawn-out peace process reaching the end of a "long march," Palestinian officials are not allowing themselves to celebrate prematurely.

Talks on security in the occupied territories are to resume on Sunday in Cairo and economic cooperation talks are being held on Monday in Paris, while U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher starts a Middle East tour during the week he is expected to meet Mr. Arafat and Israeli officials (see page 10).

Mr. Arafat is tentatively expected to fly to Cairo on Tuesday to Wednesday to meet Mr.

(Continued on page 5)

Palestinian shot dead in Gaza

GAZA CITY, occupied Gaza Strip (Agencies) — Israeli troops and settlers shot dead one Palestinian and seriously wounded another, who was arrested Saturday after an Israeli woman was knifed in a settlement in the Gaza Strip.

Later in the occupied West Bank, unknown assailants shot dead a suspected Palestinian collaborator in a street in Hebron and an Israeli soldier was seriously wounded when a Palestinian fired at him in Nablus.

The Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, claimed responsibility for the stabbing.

On Thursday, Hamas claimed responsibility for the stabbing death of an Israeli soldier whose body was found dumped in a West Bank village just north of Jerusalem. She suffered serious chest wounds.



A policeman guides the victim's father (right) away from the Sidon court execution chamber after Bassam Saleh Mosleh, 22, was hanged on Saturday for the rape and murder of his eight-year-old daughter (AFP photo)

Lebanon carries out first legal execution since 1983

SIDON (Agencies) — A 23-year-old man was hanged at daybreak Saturday for the rape and murder of an eight-year-old girl. It was the first legal execution in Lebanon in more than a decade.

Bassam Saleh Mosleh went to the gallows at 5:10 a.m. (0210GMT) in the courtyard of the house of justice in the old quarter of Sidon, provincial capital of South Lebanon. He was declared dead two minutes later by Coroner Moueen Boushi.

Lebanon reactivated the death penalty last month in a bid to restore law and order after the 1975-90 civil war, in which rival militias set up their own courts and put dozens of alleged criminals to death.

Capital punishment for pre-meditated murder was suspended in 1984 under international pressure. But a sharp rise in crime rate in the last three months prompted the government to terminate the suspension.

"The era of erecting the scaffolds has begun," President Elias Hrawi said before the execution.

As part of its law-and-order drive, the government was cracked down on the Lebanese Forces, a former militia group whose leaders are being interrogated in connection with assassinations and bombings

(see page 2).

Mosleh, a Muslim, was told he was going to be hanged only 45 minutes before the execution. He prayed in his prison cell and was given his final rites by a Muslim cleric.

"I am innocent," he told the cleric, Sheikh Fuad Masri, who commented: "No, you've committed a crime."

About 150 spectators were kept about 250 metres away from the execution site by police, who had cordoned off the area since Thursday night. They were allowed to view the dangling body half an hour after the hanging.

(Continued on page 3)

World pays tribute to Nixon

NEW YORK (Agencies) — Tributes flowed in from around the world Saturday for Richard Nixon, whose diplomatic triumph from Moscow to Beijing stood in stark contrast to his legacy as the central figure in the whirlpool of Watergate.

Nixon, who died Friday at age 81 following a stroke, continued until the end of his life to offer behind-the-scenes advice to many of the world's power brokers.

The former congressman, senator, vice president and president left his mark on his times as few national figures have done in our history," President Bill Clinton said.

"To be sure, he experienced his fair share of adversity and controversy, but his resilience and his diligent desire to give something back to this country and to the world provide a lesson for all of us about maintaining our faith in the future,"

He had left a living will that said he wanted no extraordinary measures taken to prolong his life and he was not put on a respirator, which might have relieved swelling in the brain. It is unlikely he could have recovered from partial paralysis and loss of speech.

Leaders from Washington to Beijing praised Nixon's accomplishments, his political savvy and his dedication, despite the political storm called Watergate that forced him to resign in 1974.

Nixon never recovered from a stroke he suffered Monday at his home in Park Ridge, New Jersey. His daughters, Julie Eisenhower and Tricia Cox, were by his side.

The Senate endorsed a draft law on military service as it was referred to it by the Lower House after introducing minor amendments to it.

The Senate also started debate on the 1994 municipalities draft law, and approved the first two paragraphs of article one. The senators were divided over supporting the views of the Lower House or the government on the third paragraph which defines the percentage of elected and appointed members of the Greater Amman Municipal Council.

The Lower House version of the paragraph stipulates that the number of members appointed by the Cabinet in the council should not exceed half the number of elected members.

The government's draft of the paragraph states that the number of elected and appointed members should be equal.

They appeared to be racing to complete their objectives in the U.N. "safe area" before a U.N. deadline for them to withdraw by 0001 GMT on Sunday or face massive retaliation from the air.

The Bosnian Serb Army (BSA) unleashed a ferocious tank, artillery and infantry assault despite NATO's warning and a noon (1000 GMT) ceasefire agreed with the U.N. by their political and military leaders.

A Muslim commander told the U.N. observers that fighting was heavy around the Pobedjane ammunition factory, a third of which has fallen to the Serbs during an onslaught that has killed 100 people a day this week.

He said the Serbs mined their part of the plant and hit the rest with at least 30 shells in an attempt to destroy the Muslims' capacity to arm themselves.

In an apparent signal that the U.N. believed the Serbs would withdraw from Gorazde by the Sunday deadline and 20 kilometres from the town by Wednesday.

Mr. Akashi, who has been criticised by the U.N. and NATO military for indecision, negotiated the ceasefire on Friday with Serb leaders including BSA commander General Ratko Mladić.

The source conceded the renewed fighting was ominous and added: "We gave them a last and good chance. Akashi went the extra mile and if the Bosnian Serbs cannot get their act together fast, they will have brought it down on their own heads, literally."

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The Serb attack after an overnight lull prompted fears that Gen. Mladić, a hardline Serb nationalist contemptuous of the West and political res-

Regent deplores violence in sports

Federation adopts disciplinary action against 2 soccer clubs

By P.V. Vivekanand and Aileen Banayan

who undermine public safety and distort the image of our sports movement.

It was a rare case of mass violence in Jordan, which last witnessed a serious clash among soccer fans in 1985 at the same stadium and pitting the supporters of the same two clubs.

More than 100 people were injured in Friday's riots that started with a clash on the field during a match between Al Faisali and Al Whidhat sports clubs watched by more than 20,000 people. The clash was sparked when two players kicked each other after a tackling incident during play.

As the two hit each other, their colleagues on the ground joined the melee, and fans from the two sides clashed with each other. In the ensuing frenzy, facilities at the recently-innovated stadium and the nearby King Hussein Youth Club were damaged.

Thirty minutes into the 45-minute free-for-all, the match was officially called off. Police used tear-gas to disperse the crowd. Several policemen were also injured.

"Those who do not understand sportsmanlike behaviour should stay away from our sports arena," Mr. Oweidat said. "We do not need those

(Continued on page 5)

Serbs race against ultimatum clock

SARAJEVO (R) — Bosnian Serb forces defying the threat of immediate North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) air strikes poured shells into Gorazde and its ammunition factory on Saturday, U.N. military observers in the town said.

Immediately if fighting continued but U.N. sources said authorisation was refused by United Nations envoy Yasushi Akashi.

"Akashi is absolutely firm nothing should happen before the (deadline)," the sources said. "We are not prepared for anything before that. He must give the formal go-ahead for air strikes."

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Israel seeks peace dividends from Gulf

By John West
Reuter

TEL AVIV — Israel's first official trip to a Gulf state has whetted the appetite of policymakers and businesspeople who see the lucrative and high-importing Gulf Arab markets as a real dividend of Middle East peace.

For all the talk of a Middle East common market, Israelis increasingly home in on Gulf states as their regional trading partners of the future, rather than neighbours like Syria, Jordan and Lebanon.

Deputy Foreign Minister Yossi Beilin, who led Israel's team to multilateral talks on water to Oman, said he met senior officials from Oman and other Gulf states on the sidelines to discuss bilateral trade ties.

"Cooperation with Israel is something very tangible for them. Israel's economic ties with the Gulf countries could be much more intensive than with our neighbours. There is much more complementarity with the Gulf countries," he told reporters.

While the Israelis talk of breaking psychological barriers, Gulf-based diplomats warn them not to expect too much too soon.

So far only Oman and Qatar have held public talks with Israel. Qatar is interested in Israel as a regular customer for its huge gas reserves but says trade must wait until Israel signs peace with all its Arab negotiating partners.

Israeli businesspeople say they have met counterparts from the other Gulf states, including Saudi Arabia, in contacts that have intensified since the Israeli-Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) agreement in September.

"The advantages of peace with Syria are more political than economic. But as far as the real economic dividends of peace, they lie in the Gulf," said Dan Gillerman, chairman of the Israel chamber of commerce.

"Israel's gross domestic product of \$67 billion is more than that of Egypt, Syria, Jordan, Iraq and the territor-

ies combined," he told Reuters.

Mr. Beilin said Israel had identified semi-arid agriculture, medical services, hi-tech electronics and training as sectors where Israel could dovetail with the needs of Gulf countries.

For states like Oman and Bahrain, planning for life when oil exports dry up, Israeli technology could help them diversify and get closer to food self-sufficiency. For Israel, their combined imports of over \$5 billion represent sizeable markets.

Mr. Beilin said the desalination Oman relies on for water supplies costs \$2 per cubic metre, three times more expensive than Israel's own production: "If they can reduce the price of desalination, for them it will be a very big revolution."

For Qatar and to a lesser extent Kuwait, energy-scarce Israel could offer useful technology in exchange for oil and gas and help diversify their trading partners, an important consideration for the small and import-reliant states.

One analyst of Tel Aviv's stock market said he expected the exchange's index to jump as much as 15 per cent following any Israeli-Syrian peace deal. But fueling the boom would be trade prospects in the Gulf and elsewhere, rather than with the Arab countries that border Israel.

Arab diplomats say Syria, afraid of being left out, is working hard to stop the mutual economic interests of Israel and Gulf states bearing fruit before it strikes its own peace deal.

The Syrian press launched blistering attacks on Israel's participation in the Oman talks and Syrian diplomats have led efforts to make sure an Arab League boycott of Israel stands.

"I'm sure Iran is not very happy at Israel developing ties in the Gulf. But those who are really trying to stop it are the Syrians," Mr. Beilin said.

Rabbani 'will not resign'

KABUL (R) — Afghan President Burhanuddin Rabbani said on Friday he would remain in office until the end of the year and not step down in June as agreed among quarrelling Mujahideen leader last year.

"I am the legitimate president of Afghanistan until the end of the year because I was elected as president by the people's delegates," he said in an interview.

"Unless they decide that I should hand over power to them I will stay on," he said.

A council of nationwide delegates met in Kabul in December 1992 and voted that Mr. Rabbani, leader of the Jamiat-e-Islami Party who took office six months earlier, should remain as president for two more years.

His opponents in the coalition government that took power from the former Soviet-backed administration in April 1992 refused to recognise that decision, saying Mr. Rabbani had rigged the vote by ensuring only his supporters attended the council.

As a result of meetings in March, 1993 in Islamabad and in June in the eastern Afghan city of Jalalabad, leaders of the main guerrilla parties agreed Mr. Rabbani should remain as president until June 1994 while

"Unfortunately the fighting did not stop, but escalated," Mr. Rabbani said. "Hekmatyar does not deserve to be prime minister."

More than 2,000 people have been killed in Kabul since Mr. Hekmatyar and his new ally, ex-communist warlord General Abdul Rashid Dostum, launched a blistering rocket and artillery bombardment of the capital on New Year's Day to try to topple Mr. Rabbani.

Mr. Hekmatyar is insisting that he will beat his assault on Kabul only if Mr. Rabbani resigns.

"If I resign there will be a vacuum of power in the country," Mr. Rabbani said. "But I am ready to deliver my power to the council by which I was elected in December 1992."

However, Mr. Rabbani said that the battle for supremacy could not be resolved on the battlefield, where the two sides appeared to have fought each other to a stalemate.

The measures include reopening the international airport in Nicosia under U.N. supervision and placing the tourist resort of Varosha, a suburb of Famagouste port,

under U.N. control.

The Greek and Turkish communities in Cyprus have until the end of the month to agree on steps designed to build trust between the Greek and Turkish communities.

"The United States supports the U.N. confidence-building measures," Mr. Clinton said. "We have better conditions to resolve the differences between Greece and Turkey and to have a new basis of responsible and fair cooperation than at any time in a long while."

Mr. Clinton and Mr. Papandreou also discussed Bosnia and Macedonia during their meeting.

Mr. Clinton said the United States understood Greece's worries about Macedonia, which Greece accuses of having designs on a northern Greek region of the same name. Mr. Clinton said, however, that he was "more

optimistic" about chances of resolving the dispute.

Greece has ordered an embargo against Macedonia to try to force it to stop using what Greece says are wholly Greek symbols and making what Athens considers provocative statements about northern Greece.

Greece protests Macedonia's official use of the star of Vergina, an ancient symbol associated with Alexander the Great, a Macedonian credited with spreading the Greek culture.

It was not with pleasure that we imposed an embargo, with the exception of food and pharmaceuticals, on Skopje," Mr. Papandreou said, referring to the Macedonian capital.

"We are prepared to lift the embargo, to normalise economic relations fully, to vote for the membership of the state in the CSCE (Conference on

Security and Cooperation in Europe), to support an agreement within the European Community and that state, provided simply that (Skopje) does one act: Remove the sun of Vergina and declare that the constitution in those particular articles is not valid," Mr. Papandreou said.

Mr. Papandreou's offer did not include the dispute over the country's name, which Greeks say they alone have the right to use. Mr. Papandreou said he would keep "the question of the name, which is a difficult one, as a matter of negotiation."

Mr. Clinton said "we are hopeful that an agreement can soon be reached that will lead to the lifting of the trade embargo, to normalise economic relations fully, to vote for the membership of the state in the CSCE (Conference on

Security and Cooperation in Europe), to support an agreement within the European Community and that state, provided simply that (Skopje) does one act: Remove the sun of Vergina and declare that the constitution in those particular articles is not valid," Mr. Papandreou said.

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Geagea's political career may be over

BEIRUT (Agencies) — The detention of Samir Geagea for questioning about a church bombing and the murder of a rival Christian leader may be the final blow to one of Lebanon's most controversial warlords.

Political analysts say that even if Dr. Geagea, head of the banned Lebanese Forces (LF), was found innocent of the Feb. 27 church bombing that killed 11 people and the 1990 murder for Dani Chamaa and his family, his political career may not survive.

The Maronite leader, who hails from the mountain village of Bsharri in northern Lebanon where the first Maronite monks took refuge in the Middle Ages, portrayed himself as a man of faith with a mission to preserve his Christian community.

The Lebanese Forces gave 10,000 martyrs to defend the church, now they accuse it of bombing a church. It is not possible," Dr. Geagea, 42, said in March before the LF was banned and several members charged with the attack.

"What else is there? Shortly they will accuse me of crucifying Christ," newspapers on Friday quoted Dr. Geagea as saying before his trial.

During Lebanon's 1975-90 civil war, Dr. Geagea, a former medical student addressed by following as hakim

(doctor), inspired devotion as the only man his followers believed strong and wily enough to guarantee Christian security.

But many Muslims and some Christians see him as an Israeli-backed bandit and killer who will stop at nothing to keep any government weak and the Maronites dominant.

His name was linked to many disastrous Christian military defeats, as well as wartime atrocities.

Dr. Geagea became notorious when he led an attack on the village home of Toni Franjeh, son of former President Suleiman Franjeh in the early days of the civil war.

Toni, his daughter and wife and a number of bodyguards were killed and Dr. Geagea suffered a serious shoulder injury. His right arm has still not recovered.

In 1986 he led a rebellion against LF chief Elie Hobeika, who had signed a Syrian-backed peace pact with Muslim warlords. Mr. Hobeika was ousted. Dr. Geagea became LF commander and annulled the accord.

Hizbullah refused to lay down its weapons, claiming they are needed to fight the Israelis occupying a strip of South Lebanon.

It opposes Prime Minister Rafik Hariri, a billionaire from the rival Sunni Muslim sect. So far he has been unable to justify moving against Christians fighting to liberate occupied Lebanon soil.

But, with a Mideast peace settlement in sight, he may have to soon, and eliminating weakened Christian opponents first clears the way to

Geagea stood by as Syrian troops ousted him on Oct. 13, 1990, the day officially accepted as the end of the war.

In the last months of the war and first weeks of peace, Dr. Geagea suggested a federal system, giving Christians their own self-governing region. His critics accused him of wanting to split Lebanon into religious cantons.

A keen reader of political books, Dr. Geagea is married with no children.

The clampdown of the Lebanese Forces underlines the complex political and sectarian forces still in play in Lebanon as it struggles to rebuild after the 15-year war.

It could well presage similar moves against the Iranian-backed Hezbollah. The only militia which has not been disbanded under the 1989 Taif accord.

Hizbullah refused to lay down its weapons, claiming they are needed to fight the Israelis occupying a strip of South Lebanon.

During that conflict, Dr. Geagea's Lebanese forces were the most powerful Christian militia.

Still, the 6,000-strong force voluntarily disbanded in 1991 under the peace plan, even though that shifted the balance of power to the Muslims.

Dr. Geagea transformed the militia into a political party that spoke for right-wing Maronites.

bring those who defy central authority to heel.

The government outlawed the Lebanese Forces March 23 after the one-time militia's offices were seized and several leading members arrested for the church bombing.

That was a far cry from the closing years of the war, when Dr. Geagea ruthlessly ruled the Christian hinterland, saying he was protecting the Westernised Maronites from Muslim domination.

But even under siege, he was defiant, declaring: "Nothing in this world would make us change our convictions."

He denied involvement in the church bombing and the Chamouni slaughter. He claimed Mr. Hariri is out to weaken the disorganized and largely leaderless Maronites, the main Christian sect which dominated Lebanon until the war.

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Palestinian police chiefs pledge to respect rights

GAZA CITY, Occupied Gaza Strip (AFP) — Senior members of the future Palestinian police force pledged to respect human rights here Friday, but a leader of the Islamic Resistance Movement Hamas voiced fears that the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) would dominate the force.

PLO and Hamas officials discussed the future 9,000-strong force, due to be deployed in Gaza and Jericho, at a seminar organised by the Gaza branch of the London-based human rights organisation Amnesty International.

They were meeting on the day PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat's main Fatah faction

signed a truce with Hamas to end months of conflict. They pledged to resolve their differences through dialogue in future.

It was the first high-level public debate between the two rival groups.

The Palestinian police are to be sent into Gaza and the West Bank town of Jericho once Israel and the PLO have resolved outstanding problems delaying the launch of Palestinian self-rule. The negotiators are due to resume talks in Cairo Sunday.

They are still divided over the scope of Palestinian law in the future autonomous territories, the composition of a Palestinian governing council and the issue of prisoner releases.

The police force will consist of 7,000 diaspora Palestinians and 2,000 from the occupied territories.

"We don't want the Palestinian police to be blacklisted by human rights organisations," said General Ziyad Aref of the PLO.

Mr. Arafat had recently appointed Ibrahim Abu Daqa as his special advisor on human rights, Gen. Aref said.

Mr. Abu Daqa is a lawyer and resident of the Gaza Strip, currently living in Tunis.

Mr. Arafat has been criticised from within his own ranks for an allegedly authoritarian leadership style, and several senior Palestinian officials have pressed for more democracy in the PLO.

Gen. Aref said some of the future Palestinian policemen had received training with the International Committee of the Red Cross in Cairo and Amman.

Another senior PLO official, Rashid Abu Sbak, said there could be "no success without democracy."

"We do want Palestinians of one style, one voice," he added.

However, a Hamas leader challenged the pledges given by the PLO. "Ziyad (Aref) has presented a rosy picture, and Rashid (Abu Sbak) improved on it," said Mahmoud Al Zahhar.

"Let us be realistic. We have worries concerning Palestinian power and human rights."

Mr. Zahhar raised doubts about the future of some 150 private mosques in Gaza run by families, which came under neither the Israeli-controlled religious endowments authority, nor the Muslim body responsible for religious property, the Waqf.

The private mosques are generally controlled by Hamas or Fatah.

"Will they be nationalised?" asked Mr. Zahhar.

He also voiced concern that most of the police force would be recruited from diaspora Palestinians and PLO members.

"This is good, but we are also afraid. We hope people from abroad won't be given posts (in the police) according to loyalties."

NEWS IN BRIEF

45 drown off Syrian coast

DAMASCUS (AFP) — Forty-one primary schoolchildren and four women teachers drowned when the boat they were in sank off the coast of northern Syria Friday, the official Syrian news agency SANA reported. The children were on an excursion off the port of Latakia. Rescuers saved 19 other children and took them to hospital. A search was underway for those missing, SANA said. The agency did not say how many people were on board the boat when the accident happened.

Suspected thieves lynched in Morocco

RABAT (AFP) — Two men were stoned to death by an angry crowd after being caught stealing from shoppers at a market, the Moroccan news agency MAP reported late Friday. Local officials at Fkhir Ben Salah in the high Atlas tried to intervene but they were too late to save the two robbers, one of whom died at the scene and the other in hospital. MAP said.

Russia, Turkey to boost military ties

MOSCOW (R) — Russia and Turkey may "sharply" raise their level of military cooperation in the near future, ITAR-TASS news agency said on Friday. TASS said the possibility was discussed in talks between Russia's First Deputy Prime Minister Oleg Soskovets and visiting Turkish Defence Minister Mehmet Golhan. The agency did not give details. The European Parliament condemned human rights abuses in Turkey on Thursday and called on European Union governments to follow Germany's example and cut off military aid to Ankara. Germany suspended arms shipments to Turkey earlier this month after allegations that weapons supplied by Turkey, TASS quoted Mr. Golhan as saying Turkey was ready to discuss the possibility of Russian participation in constructing several small nuclear power stations in Turkey. Mr. Soskovets said Russia was ready to consider construction of a gas pipeline going through Turkey and the former Soviet republic of Georgia.

16 feared drowned during Egyptian school outing

CAIRO (AP) — Fifteen elementary-school pupils and a chaperone disappeared and apparently drowned Friday when they went for a lunchtime swim during a holiday beach outing. Police suspected the victims may have been killed by waves. None of the bodies were recovered, but authorities said

Home News

Minister briefs Cabinet on Middle East water meeting

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Cabinet Saturday listened to a report by Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Talal Al Hasani on Jordan's participation in a Middle East conference on water issues held in Muscat on April 5.

The conference, sponsored by the United States and Russia, was part of the multilateral parley launched within the framework of the Arab-Israeli peace process in October 1991.

Jordan was represented by Ali Ghazzawi, in an observer status only in the Kingdom's decision to link its return to the peace process to the lifting of the siege on Aqaba.

Mr. Ghazzawi had told the

meeting that he could not support or oppose the decisions taken at the meeting before consulting with the Jordanian government, but later announced that he was withdrawing his statement to help the participants reach a resolution, according to a Cabinet statement.

Earlier reports said that the meeting reached consensus on several concrete proposals for cooperation in water conservation, the use of the existing resources and the introduction of modern methods to help reduce tensions that could arise due to water issues.

The statement said that the Council of Ministers set up a

six-member committee to conduct a study on the areas where part of the railway passes through the Amman region.

The committee, which comprises representatives of the ministries of transport, planning, tourism, awqaf, social development, and municipal affairs, would work out a set of plans and present their findings to the Cabinet at a later date.

In addition, the Council of Ministers listened to reports by a number of Cabinet members on the outcome of their tours in several regions. The ministers conveyed demands and requests made by the local inhabitants and local councils.

JCO considers another option for farmers to pay back debts

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordanian farmers, particularly Jordan Valley farmers, continue to be indebted by about JD15.5 million to the Jordan Cooperative Organisation (JCO) despite the organisation's plan to reschedule the debts, offer other incentives and write off part of the interest on the related loans, according to Jamal Bedour, JCO director general, so the JCO is considering another option, he added.

The JCO had offered the farmers, some of whom have debts dating back to the 1970s, tempting repayment plans over a 10-year period, said Dr. Bedour. But, he said, unfortunately some farmers are still unwilling or unable to pay back their debts.

Dr. Bedour told the Jordan Times that at least 90 per cent of the indebted farmers have

either paid or started to repay the loans, but the rest, of whom 60 per cent live in the Jordan Valley, are still reluctant.

He said the JCO is now contemplating a new repayment plan whereby the JCO would contact the concerned farmers and ask them to present their own plans for repayment which would be accepted by the JCO.

Should the farmers still not respond, he said, the JCO would be forced to take legal action through the governors and courts who would seize farmer's properties and sell them at auctions in order to pay off the debts.

Dr. Bedour said the loans were made from the deposits of cooperative societies which were kept in the JCO bank and as such, be added, these funds are now being re-claimed by their rightful owners.

Referring to the agricultural cooperative societies' con-

tributions to the national economy, Dr. Bedour said that they provide 50 per cent of the total food production in the Kingdom, especially eggs, milk and table salt, and the cooperatives own 36 per cent of the total number of cattle and 11 per cent of the sheep in the country.

Asked about the JCO's assistance to the cooperatives, Dr. Bedour said that the organisation continually provides farm equipment, fertilisers, pesticides, seeds and animal feed for JD2 million annually at subsidised prices to encourage production.

Referring to the most recent development project, Dr. Bedour said that the JCO last year embarked on a five-year pasture development plan which entails maintenance of 50,000 dunums in the wildlife reserves, planting 20,000 other dunums with trees and shrubs and drilling 30 water wells.

HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

King receives cable from Arafat

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein Saturday received a cable from Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat congratulating him on the success of his recent surgery. The King was operated on his left ear in London Thursday. Mr. Arafat wished King Hussein continued good health and happiness. King Hussein received similar cables from Upper House of Parliament Speaker Ahmad Lawzi and Director of the General Intelligence Department Lieutenant General Mustafa Al Qaisi.

Prince Ra'd meets with Islamic republics teams

AMMAN (Petra) — Chief Chamberlain Prince Ra'd bin Zeid met at the King Abdullah Mosque Saturday with heads of delegations from the Islamic republics of the former Soviet Union who attended celebrations marking the end of restoration work on the Dome of the Rock. The Prince reviewed Jordan's endeavours to safeguard the holy places in Jerusalem and discussed with the delegations exchanges of scholarships for students studying Arabic and religion.

Minister opens building materials exhibit

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Public Works and Housing Abdul Razzak Ensour Saturday opened the Fourth Jordanian Exhibition of Building Materials which displays samples of products by 60 local Arab and international firms. The exhibition, which is held at the International Fairs Centre at Marj Al Hamam, has been organised by Hikmat International Establishment in cooperation with the Ministry of Public Works and Housing. In addition to building materials, the exhibition displays tractors, pneumatic drills, and other heavy machinery used in construction. Among the foreign countries involved in the exhibition are Turkey, the United Kingdom, Sweden, Switzerland and Saudi Arabia. The organisers said that many of

the participating firms plan to engage local agents to market their products or launch joint investment schemes.

Jordan, Pakistan discuss cooperation

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordanian and Pakistani officials opened a meeting Saturday to review prospects for promoting trade, joint investment, industry, agriculture, technology, higher education, health and communications. The two sides reviewed progress in Pakistani-Jordanian cooperation in some of these fields over the past years through the help of specialised committees set up for this purpose.

Workshop on agricultural extension services to start

AMMAN (Petra) — A regional workshop on agricultural extension services is due to open at the Jordan InterContinental Hotel Monday. The workshop, which is organised by the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and the U.N. Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCAWA), will discuss the use of water for irrigation and the chemical substances in agricultural production.

Kingdom to attend agricultural meeting in Bahrain

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan is to take part in a pan-Arab meeting on agricultural products exchange due to open in Bahrain Monday. The three-day meeting will discuss facilitating the flow of agricultural products among Arab states.

JUST to hold environmental workshop

RAMTHA (Petra) — The Jordan University of Science and Technology (JUST) Thursday will organise a regional workshop on the environment. The four-day meeting will tackle research on ways to protect the environment in Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Kuwait and Bahrain.

WHAT'S GOING ON

The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Arabic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed time and place with the concerned institutions.

BALLET

★ Ballet performance (Swan Lake, Bolero, Romeo and Juliet) at the main theatre of the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m.

FILMS

★ Children's video film in German entitled "Zirri-Das Wolkens-cha" at the Royal Cultural Centre at 5:00 p.m. (60 minutes — with subtitles in English).

★ Film entitled "JFK" at the American Centre at 5:00 p.m. (205 minutes).

EXHIBITIONS

★ Exhibition of women's home-made products (including ceramics, sweets and handicrafts) at the Royal Cultural Centre.

★ Exhibition of paintings by artist Bahijah Al Hakim at Alia Art Gallery (Tel. 639303).

★ "Spring Exhibition" of Jordanian industrial

products at the World Exhibition Centre, University Road (11:00 a.m. - 10:00 p.m.) (Tel. 847115).

★ American Promotion Week '94 at the Amman International Motor Show, Airport Highway (12:00 a.m.-10:00 p.m.) (Tel. 714211).

★ Exhibition by artist Mustafa Al Hallaj at Beladna Art Gallery, Gardens St. (Tel. 687598).

★ Exhibition by artists Alia Ammeura, Dorothy Mangu, Hind Naser, Jauine Saaf, Lucy Mario, Tete Wegelin at Ab'd Art Gallery (10:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.) (Tel. 819861).

★ Exhibition by Jordanian and Iraqi artists at the Italian Language Centre (9:00 a.m.-8:00 p.m.) (Tel. 669348).

★ Jordanian-Iraqi contemporary exhibition by over 80 artists at Alia Art Gallery in Wadi Salqa (9:30 a.m.-8:00 p.m.) (Tel. 644451).

★ Exhibition of sculptures and drawings by Jordanian sculptor Samer Tabha. Also showing "permanent" exhibition of 56 Arab contemporary artists at Darat Al Funun of the Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation in Jabal Luweibdeh (Tel. 643251).

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Britain calls siege on Aqaba 'excessive' ACC chief tells visiting British trade delegation future joint ventures require foreign equity share

By Ian Atalla
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The United Kingdom feels that the current U.N. enforced naval blockade of Aqaba should be modified, said British Ambassador to Jordan Peter Hinchcliffe Saturday at the Amman Chamber of Commerce (ACC).

The committee, which comprises representatives of the ministries of transport, planning, tourism, awqaf, social development, and municipal affairs, would work out a set of plans and present their findings to the Cabinet at a later date.

In addition, the Council of Ministers listened to reports by a number of Cabinet members on the outcome of their tours in several regions. The ministers conveyed demands and requests made by the local inhabitants and local councils.

result of this blockade," Mr. Hinchcliffe said at the ACC meeting with a visiting commercial delegation of the South of England Exporters Association (SEEA).

Mr. Hinchcliffe spoke after ACC President Mohammad Asfour emphasised to the ambassador and the SEEA delegation Jordanians' sense of indignation and frustration towards the blockade, and said that since it had begun, "some 1,800 ships have come to Aqaba and not one ship was found in violation of the U.N. resolutions."

Members of the ACC also said that more ways should be found to address the vastly unequal trade balance between the two nations.

Whereas England exported JD 127.9 million worth of goods and services to Jordan in 1993, according to available statistics, Jordanian exports to England totalled a mere JD 2.5 million in the same period.

The ACC suggested an increase in joint venture projects between Jordan and Britain to the SEEA delegation as a means towards alleviating the current situation, but Mr. Asfour cautioned that "we have suffered before in such programmes."

At times in the past, he explained, foreign partners in such joint ventures had made only minimal equity investments in the projects and

then, partially into the projects' execution, "they got squeamish and ran away."

"Now, we feel that any foreign partner in a joint project in Jordan must have an equity investment in it," in order to guarantee a certain level of commitment on their part.

Mr. Asfour also said that British food exporters had apparently faced some difficulty in their business with Jordan lately because of the current toughening of Jordanian food and drug surveillance.

"Maybe we are too cautious about these things," Mr. Asfour said. "Still, it is better to be too cautious than

not enough."

He also told the delegation that until a comprehensive peace plan was worked out between Israel and all of its neighbours, Jordan had no plans to withdraw from its participation in the Arab commercial boycott of Israel.

Mr. Hinchcliffe told the ACC group that Britain was currently working on drawing up a number of mutual tax agreements with Jordan which would add to facilitating trade between the two countries.

The SEEA delegation arrived in Amman Friday evening after a visit to Lebanon, and will stay in Jordan until April 26.

Visiting Lebanese minister urges technical education

AMMAN (Petra) — Lebanese Minister of Technical Education and Vocational Training Hassan Izzeddin Saturday criticised Arab countries for focusing on domestic affairs and ignoring issues common to the Arab nation.

Addressing the opening session of a six-day international seminar in the Arab World in the 21st century, Dr. Izzeddin said that the main dangers and challenges facing the Arab nation as a whole are represented in the confrontation with the Israeli enemy and the failure of all educational projects in the Arab countries.

Citing Lebanon as an example, Dr. Izzeddin said that his country's education and vocational training programmes have so far failed to link training with Lebanon's economic needs, adding that the country lacks the concept of dealing with pan-Arab issues.

The meeting was addressed at the outset by Minister of Higher Education Saeed Tell who deplored His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent.

Underlining the role of vocational and technical training in economic life, Dr. Tell said that the Kingdom's 51 community colleges have supplied the market with a significant number of badly needed technicians and skilled labourers.

The Ministry of Higher Education contributed towards these colleges' success by helping them create training programmes for students in medical and engineering professions.

Earlier, the Lebanese minister had a meeting with Abdulla Oweidat, the acting minister of education, and reviewed educational cooperation between Lebanon and Jordan.

Dr. Izzeddin listened to a briefing on Jordan's educational plans.

The Lebanese minister, who is on a four-day visit to Jordan which started Friday evening, will tour several educational institutions in the Kingdom.

Lebanon carries out execution

(Continued from page 1)

"Long live justice," said Salim Yassin Mohsen, grandfather of Mostafa's victim.

"This execution is a relief for our conscience and for the entire society," said the 60-year-old man, who was in the crowd along with several relatives. "I hope execution remains for good in Lebanon to deter criminals."

The wooden scaffold used in the last previous execution, the 1983 hanging of Ibrahim Tarraf in Beirut's Sanaya Park, had been dusted off, refitted and shipped to Sidon for the occasion.

Mosleh lost a final appeal for clemency Thursday when President Hrawi ratified the death sentence handed down by a court of law.

He was convicted of the January 1993 rape and murder of Miryam Hasan Mohsen. He had raped the girl, then smashed her head with a rock in an orange grove near the southern port of Tyre, 80 kilometres south of Beirut.

Mosleh's hanging marked the first state-sanctioned execution in Lebanon since 1983 and the 14th since Lebanon gained independence from France in 1943.

There has been no vocal opposition within Lebanon to

the death penalty for 15 Palestinians charged with murdering a Jordanian diplomat in Beirut in January, and five Muslims who tried to blow up a busload of orthodox priests in 1992.

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Features

Israeli, Palestinian artists join hands to build a bridge of peace

By Rosalind Mandine Murphy

WASHINGTON — Long before the negotiators got together, a group of Palestinian and Israeli artists decided to break down the barriers that separate their communities and through their creative work build a "bridge of peace."

They did so with a joint exhibition in 1982 in Jerusalem. Twelve years later, through the many ups and downs of the peace process, the core group is still together. Its most recent joint exhibition, "Building Bridges: Israeli and Palestinian Artists Speak," is on display at the Meridian International Centre in Washington April 20 through July 17.

Twelve artists from Tel Aviv, Jerusalem and other parts of the West Bank are displaying 46 works in oil, acrylic, and mixed media, as well as drawings, collages, abstracts and sculpture. In an extension of the exhibit, Israeli artist Tamara Getter displays her installation "The Milida Dreams" — a structure that looks like a military fort — at the nearby District of Columbia Arts Centre.

Participating artists vary in age, style and origin, but their purpose for showing together is to project unity. In a statement issued by the artists, they explain their goals:

"Our meetings continue to emphasize the role of culture and art in building bridges of understanding between peoples and in the ability to bypass cultural and intellectual fanaticism from which our area has been suffering."

"The timing of our exhibition purposely coincides with that of peace negotiations in order to add a new dimension to our experience and to emphasize the artists' commitment to peace for the good of future generations."

Noting that the artists also exhibit their work individually and are well-known in their own right, Ariella Azoulay, the show's curator, said the decision to put on a joint exhibition was more political than artistic.

"They will continue to try to show together until the Palestinians have a state for themselves and the occupation is done," Ms. Azoulay, a curator in Tel Aviv, said.

The group first got together in 1981 when progressive Israeli artists expressed their support for their Palestinian colleagues, who were finding it difficult, and in some cases impossible, to

enjoy artistic freedom under a military occupation.

In the 1970s, many Palestinian artists found their works confiscated by military authorities and were forbidden to paint in the colours of the Palestinian flag — red, black, white and green. Saleem Mansour, an artist living in Bir Zeit, said:

When one artist in Gaza was imprisoned for six months for creating "political paintings," some Israeli artists "came to us and told us that we should do a protest," Mr. Mansour recalled. In this sense, he pointed out, "the reason for us being together was artistic, because artists were afraid for the fate of other artists."

Their protest translated into the first joint exhibition in Jerusalem in 1982. Since then, the artists have put on at least 10 joint exhibitions in Israel, the occupied territories, Europe and the United States. The artists include: Nabil Anani, Asad Azi, Tayseer Barakat, Amon Ben David, Taleb Duweik, Moshe Gershuni, Tamara Getter, Pamela Levy, Jawad Mahmud, Suliman Mansour, Khalil Rabah and David Reeb.

Just as the peace process has been difficult, so too have been the artists' efforts to present joint exhibitions. In the beginning, the artists could not show in the West Bank and Gaza because of the military censorship, Mr. Mansour recalled. Showing in Israel also had its problems, Moshe Gershuni, an artist from Tel Aviv, added.

"We showed once in Haifa and a member of Parliament tore down the paintings. We had many difficulties," he said.

Despite these hurdles, the artists persevered in their commitment to peace and understanding. "We know that working together as artists is really important to make the peace. We have been working since 1981. From that day we had wars in the Middle East all the time, but it didn't affect our work," Mr. Mansour said.

For the Palestinians, the joint exhibitions allow them to showcase their culture and gain recognition of their work, said Taleb Duweik, a Palestinian artist from Jerusalem.

"Most of the exhibition on the part of the Palestinians stresses on the nationality of the Palestinian culture," Mr.

Duweik said through an interpreter. "As an artist, I am interested in spreading as much as possible of my own culture."

Cooperating with Israeli artists helps to break down barriers between the Palestinians and the Israeli people, he said. When Israelis come to see the joint exhibitions, it is much more than people just coming to see art, he said. For the Palestinians, it means "a kind of recognition of our problem."

Mr. Duweik stressed that for a Palestinian artist, it is impossible to separate art from politics. "We are living in an occupation regime and there is no way to prevent it," he said. His collage paintings on exhibit at the Meridian Centre reflect this mingling of art, culture and politics.

In one collage, one sees the outline of the old city of Jerusalem in the background of a golden-window-frame. In this collage, Mr. Duweik explained, he is saying the future of Jerusalem "is not clear, it is blurry." Another collage depicts a woman and man looking upwards to the sky, surrounded by bars. Here, Mr. Duweik said, he is expressing a message about Palestinian exiles.

"Their families are waiting for them and looking through the sky, and they can't see them.... The bars represent the jail bars that cannot be broken, forcing the Palestinian people in a corner," Mr. Duweik said. He read the verse he has written in one corner of the collage: "If the people want life, life will be achieved and the bars must be broken."

Mr. Duweik noted that he often paints a golden moon in his paintings, symbolizing hope: "With the new moon, there is new hope. Always there is a hope."

An interesting example showing the mingling of art and politics from the Palestinian perspective is Khalil Rabah's untitled piece that features traditional Palestinian embroidery on a United Nations Works and Relief Agency (UNRWA) food aid canvas bag, a reference to the refugee status of many Palestinians.

Israeli artist David Reeb, in a painting that resembles contact paper of photographic negatives, depicts children playing soccer alongside scenes of Israeli soldiers.

Arnold Ben David's paintings are of the Israeli and Arab negotiators sitting at the conference table at the USIA.

Madrid peace talks in 1991. Other pieces are more abstract, such as Moshe Gershuni's "From that Day and Later on," which depicts pink and gray puffs of clouds in a scene that evokes a post-nuclear holocaust world.

Clearly, the conflicts in the region pull at these Israeli artists. Tamara Getter, an artist from Tel Aviv, discussed this struggle.

As an artist in Israel, "you are not working for a cause. You are working for your art... But it is very difficult in this historical moment to do it and not feel this struggle," she explained.

Speaking impassionately, Ms. Getter contrasted the lot of Israeli artists to that of Palestinian artists: "Israeli artists have easy access to any information on what is going on in galleries in New York or Paris. They are up to date... Whereas for the Palestinian artists in occupation, life is very difficult. They have no access."

Furthermore, she added, Israeli artists have facilities, supplies and opportunities to exhibit their work that Palestinian artists do not have.

"Palestinian painters work in terrible conditions... It is something heroic to be a Palestinian artist in this situation. They want to be artists. They don't necessarily want to be painting slogans," she stressed.

The joint exhibitions call attention to this situation and also give Israeli artists an opportunity to reflect and question their own art and culture, Ms. Getter said.

For Ms. Getter, an understanding of Palestinian culture opens up an awareness of Israel's own cultural and artistic life as a Middle Eastern country: "My feeling is that the Israeli cultural scene is Western in its vision. We are interested in our neighbours in a future Palestinian state. We don't like that Israeli culture is oriented only towards New York. We think it is time to be interested in what is going on around us."

Nancy Matthews, vice president of Meridian International Centre, said this exhibition "Illustrates the mission of Meridian House, which is the exchange of people and ideas in the arts in the pursuit of international understanding." She said that while an itinerary for the exhibit is still being worked out, she envisions a two-year tour across the United States.

USIA

By Rana Sabbagh

Reuter

AMMAN — Five months after becoming Jordan's first woman member of the Lower House of Parliament, Toujan Faisal has made more enemies than friends.

Her fiery temper, confrontational style and lack of tact have alienated even former supporters. Some say her series of public battles have dealt a severe blow to future political opportunities for women.

"Toujan is committing political suicide because she is too ambitious and wants to change things for the better overnight," said Samir Madani, a U.S.-educated engineer who voted for her in last November's election.

Within weeks of the vote she had threatened the media for what she saw as sexist cartoons. She fought with two conservative deputies and angered even backers with her outbursts in the ensuing debates.

The 45-year-old former TV personality is unbowed, maintaining her abrasive style is necessary to bring improvements to the lives of Jordanians.

"I feel like a scapegoat with many knives pointed at me," Ms. Faisal told a group of men and women evaluating her tenure.

The mother of three, who rose to fame in earlier battles with Islamic fundamentalists over subjects like polygamy, lashed out at the media, government and fellow members of Parliament.

Faisal, who has called parliamentarians "lethargic" on human rights, said she has to teach people the importance of democracy.

"I am being singled out by Parliament and the government because I am investigating public rights issues and cases of misuse of power," she said. "The state-controlled media is only publishing negative things about me."

The elegant blonde wife of a gynaecologist, Ms. Faisal says a confrontational style is needed in a Parliament she sees as pliant and ignoring abuses of power.

Some original backers agree, blaming tribal and religious traditions in a conservative, male-dominated Muslim society for her difficult transition.

"Given the socio-economic and political circumstances and the structure of Parliament, it is a crime to make Toujan bear all the responsibility," said Wa'el Abu Daboush of the leading Nationalist political party Al Ahd (Oath).

"To be alone means a lot, in addition to the fact that Faisal and her colleagues have not fully matured in terms of their political and



Toujan Faisal: "I teach discipline to children, I will teach discipline to this House"

DWINDLING SUPPORT

Five months in Parliament, Faisal makes more enemies than friends

democratic experience."

Her election in the first multi-party ballot since 1957 took most people by surprise. It was hailed as a first step toward more political rights for Jordan's two million women.

She won 1,885 votes, taking one of three seats earmarked for Circassians — Muslims who left the Caucasus about a century ago. She was one of only three women who competed with 533 men to fill the 80-seat Lower House.

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"To be alone means a lot, in addition to the fact that Faisal and her colleagues have not fully matured in terms of their political and

Upper House of Parliament (the Senate).

But there is concern her breakthrough could be wasted.

"The way in which she manages her viewpoints and any crisis that faces her does not correspond to the requirements of politics and diplomacy," said Asma Khader, head of the Jordanian Women's Union.

"The way in which (Toujan Faisal) manages her viewpoints and any crisis that faces her does not correspond to the requirements of politics and diplomacy," Asma Khader, head of the Jordanian Women's Union.

"We even asked her to deal calmly and rationally and to look for solutions, not to escalate crises," Ms. Khader, a leading lawyer and human rights activist, told Reuters.

"But unfortunately, it seems she does not like to listen or to discuss suggestions."

This House," Ms. Faisal shouted before storming out in protest.

Many political activists and feminists argue the controversy reflects the struggle as politics and society are liberalised. Women are about 12 per cent of the workforce of 550,000. One woman is in the cabinet and two in the

long-running battle with Islamists, the largest bloc in Parliament, resumed when she took her seat, but she found her once considerable support ebbing away.

Last month, Parliament refused to lift the immunity of a member Ms. Faisal had accused of hurling insults —

to anyone who shed her

Lower House.

When she ran unsuccessfully for Parliament in 1989, Muslim militants declared her an apostate, asking in vain for a court to annul her marriage and grant immunity to anyone who shed her

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South African unemployment 'absolutely massive' — IMF

WASHINGTON (R) — South Africa's most pressing problem is unemployment on an "absolutely massive" scale that must be tackled by a new government after all-race elections next week, a senior IMF official said Friday.

"About 50 per cent of the labour force can't find jobs in the formal sector of the economy," said Leslie Lipschitz, assistant director of the African Department at the International Monetary Fund (IMF). He was speaking at a news conference ahead of the IMF-World Bank spring meeting this weekend.

"The fundamental problem is an unemployment rate that is absolutely massive," he emphasised.

The IMF, which loaned some \$850 million to South Africa last December for the first time in more than a decade, has maintained links since then with government officials and with the African National Congress, which is widely expected to sweep the landmark elections, IMF officials said.

Mr. Lipschitz said sustainable growth rates of some five to six per cent were needed to cut the jobless rate but this year he forecast growth of only two to three per cent, after a minimal improvement last year and several years of chronic recession.

Achieving such an acceleration in the face of domestic savings rates that remain very low is a key problem, he said.

"The answer, quite clearly, is foreign investment," he said.

Foreign and local investors have faced roller coaster South

African financial markets this year amid political uncertainty and violence ahead of the polls.

In Johannesburg, Nelson Mandela entered the capitalist temple of the Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE) Friday and told jittery brokers their future was secure with him.

Shouted buy and sell orders subsided into nervous applause as South Africa's president-in-waiting walked onto the exchange trading floor to try to reassure financial markets and industry his African National Congress (ANC), is with them no against them.

"The economy of the country must be built on sound and market principles," Mr. Mandela told shirt-sleeved brokers crowding the trading floor of one of the world's top 10 exchanges.

Traders, a handful of black faces among them, listed in silence as Mr. Mandela tried to put aside deeply held fears of nationalisation and even communism if, as expected, the ANC wins a majority bold on power in all-race elections next week.

Through the trading floor doors could be heard African chanting and singing filling the towering atrium of the stock exchange building with its bronze statue of a bull and bear.

The rare sight of dozens of black men and women chanting "viva Mandela" and singing ANC campaign songs in the heart of white South Africa capitalism brought office workers to their windows to stare down at a taste of their multi-racial future.

"I am concerned with economic stability in this country," Mr. Mandela told brokers who have ridden a roller coaster with investors here and aboard focusing on political uncertainty.

The overall JSE index leapt 110 points when the conservative Inkatha Freedom Party of Zulu chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi agreed Tuesday to join the historic elections, removing one of the key causes of political violence and uncertainty.

Since the beginning of the year the market has traded through a 562 point range and at 5,083 points on Friday the overall index was 8.3 per cent higher than it started the year.

Brokers and traders who listened in silence gave a muted response to Mr. Mandela's vision of a future partnership between government and business to build a non-racial South Africa.

One said his cautious tone would "underpin recent gains." Another said it held nothing new for South Africans but could reassure foreigners nervous about investing here.

"My personal feeling is that I still regard it as electioneering," said another trader, "but may mean it at the moment but a year or two down the line they may change it all."

Said another: "I don't know if they are going to vote for him but I think people have a lot of trust in him."

Fulfilling that trust will be crucial to the ANC aim of attracting domestic and foreign capital to get the "kickstart" to the economy Mr. Mandella says

he wants. Apart from attracting new capital the ANC must persuade existing investors to stay.

Nationalisation and communism were not part of the ANC reconstruction and development plan, Mr. Mandela said, adding that he had drawn big business into ANC decision-making and had been at pains to reassure the World Bank and International Monetary Fund. "I do so because of the critical role of business in building our economy," he said.

Mr. Mandela, whose party retains close links to the South African Communist Party, added: "Without business we are not able to settle the problems of this country."

Above him a huge trading screen ticked off quotes for the rand currency and the gold price. Ahead of him stained-glass windows depicted the sources of South African wealth: shipping, agriculture, mining, finance, commerce, transport, industry.

The most reassuring element of his speech for many traders was a call to ANC supporters to abandon any thoughts of mass action before or after the election. With blacks now able to vote, he said, mass action was obsolete — part of the apartheid past.

"In our concern to restore economic stability in this country we have called upon our people now to end mass action. We have now got the vote and in six days time we will exercise that right — there is no need for any mass action," he pointed out.

Latin America rejects any conditions on trade

SAO PAULO (R) — Latin American foreign ministers meeting their European counterparts in Brazil said Friday they would not tolerate any attempts from Europe to link trade relations with sensitive issues like human rights, the environment and social issues.

"We have to keep the alarm button switched on just in case efforts are made to impose conditions (on trade)," Colombian Foreign Minister Noemi Sanin told reporters before the start of the two-day ministerial meeting of the European Union and Latin America's Rio group.

Latin American sensitivity over possible European "linkage" of trade with issues like workers' protection and human rights appeared likely to be a major concern at the meeting, the first between the two regional groups since the historic signing last week of the

GATT world trade treaty. Ecuador's Foreign Minister Diego Paredes expressed Latin American fears that the region's previously favourable trade position in relation to Europe might now be in danger of slipping. "We fear that it might disappear," he said.

According to European union figures, Latin American exports to Europe fell to \$25 billion in 1993 from \$28 billion in 1990. In contrast, European exports to Latin America jumped to \$26 billion in 1993 from \$17 billion in 1990.

The European Union and Rio group ministers were expected to issue a joint general declaration Sunday, the São Paulo declaration, expressing their views on issues like bilateral trade and investment, democracy and the need to work together to fight drug trafficking and human rights violations.

U.S. top choice among executives in competitiveness poll

GENEVA (R) — The United States is the first choice among top executives worldwide seeking both business opportunities and personal fulfilment, according to a survey.

China was selected by international business leaders — ahead of the United States, Japan and Germany — as the country likely to be the most competitive in the year 2010.

Some 1,747 executives were surveyed by the World Economic Forum in Geneva and the International Institute for Management Development, based in Lausanne. The executive opinion survey is part of the "world competitiveness report," to be published in full on Sept. 7.

"Respondents, regardless of their geographical location, perceived the United States as the country where business opportunities and personal objectives for quality of life are attainable dreams," said a survey summary.

Switzerland, heavily favoured among European business leaders, and Austria, preferred by Asian executives, were second and third in the list of 44 countries ranked according to business opportunities and personal goals.

International business leaders were responding to a new question in the annual poll: "If you could do it again, in which three countries would you choose to live and work?"

Regarding competitiveness, the summary said: "The best are definitely placed on China being a very strong competitor, together with the United States, Japan and Germany in 2010."

Asked which three countries had the best government to support their competitiveness, business executives chose the United States, narrowly followed by Japan.

"Not surprisingly, Singapore is close behind (in third place)," the summary added.

Yeltsin urged to clear up privatisation mess

MOSCOW (R) — Stockbrokers from regions as far apart as Siberia and Far East gathered at Russia's first post-communist securities conference Saturday to put together the pieces of the country's fragmented stock market system.

But the crowd of fund managers, central bank and government officials and exchange chairmen meeting at a gloomy Soviet-era conference hall in Moscow found little to agree on.

Regional representatives attacked Moscow for monopolising privatisation, Moscow officials accused the central bank of failing to improve Russia's primitive settlements system and fund managers blamed the government for doing nothing.

But to speaker after speaker, the key question was all too familiar — who is in charge of privatisation in Russia?

Privatisation Minister Anatoly Chubais, whom communists and ultraliberals say must be put in jail for selling the nation for a pittance, said President Boris Yeltsin was in charge.

The youthful, clean-shaven minister, the only cabinet member with a direct phone line to Mr. Yeltsin except Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin, told Reuters that a series of presidential decrees would speed up sell-offs in coming days.

"I have personally discussed this question with President Yeltsin and he supports the fact that this is one of the most important issues," Mr. Chubais said. "We have concrete decisions. New bankruptcy decrees will be issued one of these days. We don't have parliament backing, but we have the full support of President Yeltsin. We rely on him."

The reformist Chubais, who survived a cabinet reshuffle in January thanks to Mr. Yeltsin, urged all market players to stop fighting each other and start cooperating.

"Time is running against us," he told the meeting. "We have scandals on the market almost every day. It's dangerous if we start blaming each other. We will only destroy the market."

More than 40 million Russians have become shareholders since privatisation began

in 1992 when the entire population received free vouchers which could be swapped for shares in state firms.

The speed of the voucher privatisation, in which more than 10,000 state enterprises were transferred to private hands, has produced a disorganized marketplace which appeared almost overnight without a common regulatory framework.

A Securities Exchange Commission set up by Mr. Chubais is pushing for common dealing rules and self-regulation modelled on the Anglo-Saxon system, or a Russian version of NASDAQ.

This is a draconian task in Russia, which has over 80 stock exchanges in competition with each other in a country spanning 11 time zones.

Separate state bodies are competing with each other to regulate the market — not to mention the central bank which has half a dozen computer systems, none compatible with the others.

Investors are prone to fraud in the absence of a single government body powerful enough to impose self-policing.

Many separate state bodies are competing with each other to regulate the market — not to mention the central bank which has half a dozen computer systems, none compatible with the others.

There are so many fake shares out there, in addition to all the scandals we have," said Jonathan Hay, a Western adviser to the Securities Exchange Commission.

"Some funds are just selling air. If the public gets the wrong idea, this could stop the whole privatisation process, he pointed out.

Just like Russia's post-communist capitalism, privatisation is at a dog-eat-dog stage. One bizarre scene this week was flat jackets being sold to bankers at a Moscow banking conference. Privatisation officials trying to crack down on abuses face organised crime gangs.

Mr. Chubais acknowledged the chaos.

"Capital markets cannot be regulated by cabinet meetings in Moscow," he said. "The finance ministry, the state property committee, the central bank all have different positions. The market can only be regulated by people working there."

Indonesia launches \$100m tourism campaign

JAKARTA (R) — Indonesia has launched a five-year campaign expected to cost more than \$100 million to generate more tourism revenue, organisers have said.

An aim of the campaign, which started on April 1 and will cost \$14.4 million in the first year, is to promote areas of the world's biggest archipelago outside Java and Bali.

Indonesia, facing declining oil revenues and foreign investment, has said it plans to boost tourist arrivals this calendar year to 3.9 million from 3.4 million last year. Tourism earned the country about \$3.6 million in 1993.

It is keen to win a sizeable slice of the rapidly growing tourism market in Asia, which the World Tourism Organisation says could reach one-fifth

of the global total by 2010.

Organisers said the new campaign would include advertising, direct marketing and travel shows depicting some of Indonesia's almost 14,000 equatorial islands, home to some of the world's most diverse wildlife and tropical forest.

In the initial phase of the campaign, Indonesia has identified top priority markets as Japan, Taiwan, Singapore, Germany and Australia... a total of more than \$100 million is expected to be spent, a government-sponsored organiser said.

President Suharto has called for Indonesia to broaden its appeal to tourists and develop attractions outside Bali and Java, the main island on which 60 per cent of the country's 185 million people live.

JUMBLE

WHAT SCRABBLE WORD GAME, by Henri Arnold and Mike Aragon

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

VIALE		

IDLAY		

YIRAWA		

MOONAR		

THE ROUTE THEY TOOK TO GRANDMA'S HOUSE.

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer here: THE [REDACTED]

Saturday's Jumbles: GLORY HEDGE MATRON LIQUID

Answer: Playing with her puppy left her like this — DOG TIRED

THE Daily Crossword by Gerald R. Ferguson

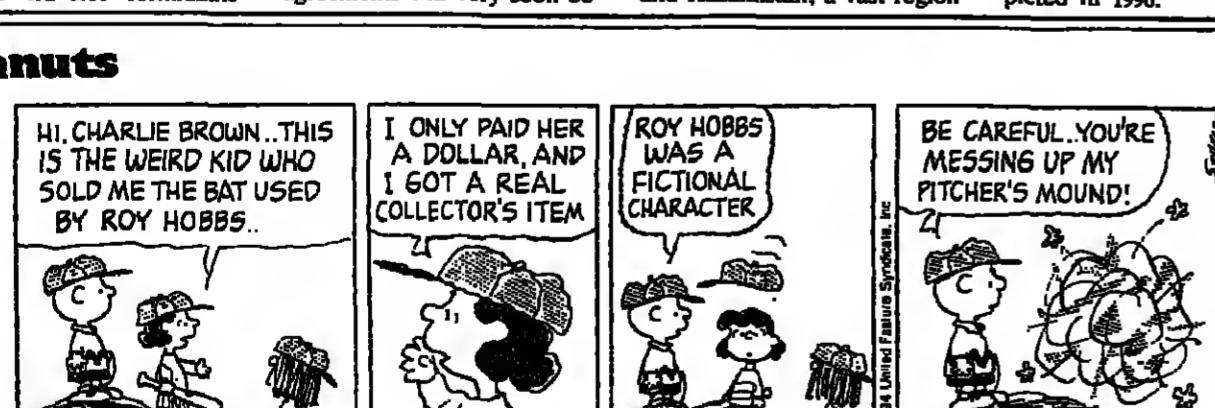
ACROSS

- 1 Steroid foodstuff
- 5 Friend of Pythias
- 10 The ready
- 14 Colossal
- 15 German craft
- 18 Govt. agency
- 19 Ball-point ancestor?
- 21 Tree native
- 22 Rep.'s rival
- 23 Guidon or gonfalon
- 25 Come — (find)
- 26 Moto members
- 32 Shallow riverbank
- 33 Armed band
- 34 General Arnold
- 36 Personalized
- 38 Map abbrev.
- 41 Soft sweetie
- 42 Dye-producing plant
- 43 Jostled
- 45 Obstetric
- 47 Bellcoose god
- 48 — was going
- 49 An Anderson
- 51 Water of TV
- 52 Major art works, e.g.
- 53 Sister of Cleo
- 54 Hide
- 55 Period
- 64 Run in place
- 1 Extended story
- 2 Way off base?
- 3 Groundless mass
- 4 Settled in Thessaly
- 5 Starts up to
- 6 Naval position
- 7 Sound of pain
- 8 Cereal grain
- 9 Extreme degree
- 10 Search for food
- 12 Sharpen
- 13 River in Thailand
- 16 Territories
- 17 Glaciologist
- 20 Auspicious
- 24 Pairs with acidity
- 26 Inclined
- 27 Honey badger
- 28 Ear, pref.
- 30 — in (enclosed)
- 31 Virginian's river
- 32 Lays concrete
- 35 Nabors role
- 37 Barker's daughter
- 38 English poet laureate
- 39 Top
- 40 Flock
- 44 Foothills
- 45 Crustacean
- 46 Stunt style
- 48 Mountain ridge
- 50 Prevaricator
- 51 Look like a rake
- 52 Italian town
- 53 Spanish
- 54 Polish's cap
- 55 Emulate Tomba
- 56 Young sheep
- 57 Older sheep
- 58 Italian
- 59 Clutch
- 60 Bleat

Yesterday's Puzzle Solution:

AMANDA CANADA HILL
LITERATURE WADE
DRAKE DRAKE DRAKE
DEBBIE DEBBIE DEBBIE
EMILY EMBRY EMBRY
ERIN ERIN ERIN
FRANK FRANK FRANK
GREGORY GREGORY GREGORY
HILARY HILARY HILARY
JULIA JULIA JULIA
KAREN KAREN KAREN
LAUREN LAUREN LAUREN
MELISSA MELISSA MELISSA
NICHOLAS NICHOLAS NICHOLAS
PAUL PAUL PAUL
ROBIN ROBIN ROBIN
SARAH SARAH SARAH
TOMMY TOMMY TOMMY
VANESSA VANESSA VANESSA
WENDY WENDY WENDY
XAVIER XAVIER XAVIER

Peanuts



Mutt'n Jeff



UAE to make slick cleaner

DUBAI (R) — U.S. aircraft giant McDonnell Douglas, seeking to invest more than \$100 million in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to offset arms sales, has helped set up a firm in the Arab Gulf state to make an agent for cleaning up oil slicks. A new limited liability company, to be called Fyrezyne Middle East Ltd., is being set up, officials said.

The U.S. company, acting as match-maker, set up the joint venture between UAE businessman Abdulla Ahmad Al Moosa and Arizona-based Ecology Technologies International Inc., which has the patent on the liquid agent known as Fyrezyne.

Al Shall did not say how it obtained the figure, but it is

Kuwait sets big budget for arms — consultancy

KUWAIT (R) — Kuwait has earmarked a hefty 500 million dinars (\$1.68 billion) for spending on weapons and military training in the 1994/95 fiscal year starting on July 1, an economic consultancy said Saturday.

The Al Shall consultancy suggested in a weekly economic commentary that this was an excessive level of spending.

"The national budget includes for the first time, under the 'defence upgrading' heading, preliminary estimates of defence expenditures," it said. "A disconcerting sign is exhibited by virtue of earmarking 500 million dinars for next year."

Al Shall did not say how it obtained the figure, but it is

known to have good contacts with the government.

"Controlling the 1994/95 budget deficit is supposed to be a prime and pressing task," Al Shall said.

The Gulf war-inflated deficit is running at around 2.0 billion dinars (\$5.7 billion) or a third of national wealth as measured by gross domestic product.

A bill enacted this month gave parliamentary approval for the first time to a 12-year, 3.5 billion dinar (\$11.7 billion) programme of spending on major weapons and military training.

The law also consolidates the hitherto secret allocations for arms procurement and military training into the main defence budget — a move that

gives the national assembly authority for the first time to examine them in the annual budget debate.

Major weapons purchases for the small Gulf state's 13,000-strong military have hitherto been off-budget.

Al Shall, a critic of what it sees as the state's tendency towards excessive spending on arms and prestige projects, suggested that money was being spent too rapidly under the programme, which was introduced in last form of an emir decree in 1992.

"We believe the 1.6 billion dinars (\$5.3 billion) has already been spent or been committed in the past two years, when the proposed expenditures mentioned above

are added to this figure, the total will reach 2.1 billion (\$7.0 billion), or a yearly average of 700 million (\$2.35 billion)," it said.

Al Shall said the yearly average expenditure under the programme ought to be lower, at around 290 million dinars (\$970 million), if the government spreads out its spending of the 3.5 billion dinars in equal annual installments over 12 years.

Diplomats say Kuwait is considering the possible purchase in coming years of 16 attack helicopters, eight fast patrol boats, six missile attack boats, 24 self-propelled Howitzers, a multi rocket launch system and some general purpose helicopters.

Sudan's exporters demand better exchange rate

Sabri Mohammad Al Hassan.

governor of the Bank of Sudan, said no change in export policies was expected until next year. The rate of 215 pounds to the dollar would stay in force this year, he said.

Sudan's exports have fallen sharply. Last year exports earned only \$300 million, down from \$800 million about a decade ago.

IFC helps Tunisia

after the Tunisian central bank's agreement had been obtained.

One of the bank's main functions would be to advise on privatising state-run companies, he told Reuters after a closed-door seminar involving Western investment companies and Tunisian officials.

Mr. Doublet said foreign companies, including France's Sipatec, would invest millions of dollars in Tuninvest International, an investment fund created in a joint venture with the Tunisian private company Tuninvest.

Tuninvest International will invest in local enterprises with the aim of preparing them for listing in the Tunis market.

Foreign companies attending the seminar included London-based Baring Securities Ltd., Citibank N.A., Fleming Investment

Emirates

airline posts \$20m profit

TUNIS (R) — The International Finance Corporation (IFC), a world Bank Subsidiary, said Friday it was helping to create Tunisia's first merchant bank and an investment fund to boost privatisation and the local stock market.

Jean-Michel Doublet,

IFC

investment officer for capital markets in Central Asia, Middle East and North Africa, said foreign financial corporations as well as Tunisian firms would be involved in both institutions.

Mr. Doublet said he knew of several U.S. and European investors ready to buy shares on the Tunis Stock Exchange once the small number of listed firms was increased through privatisation, and the Tunisian government clarified procedures for foreign buyers.

Mr. Doublet said the bank would be created "very soon"

India eyes foodgrain exports

NEW DELHI (R) — The Indian government is considering exporting wheat and rice export for the first time, the head of its biggest grain trading agency said.

"We have surplus stocks of both wheat and rice and one alternative being thought of is to export these foodgrains," said Food Cooperation of India (FCI) Chairman R. Narayanan.

Senior food ministry official A.C. Sen said last month India was exploring the possibility of exporting half a million tonnes each of rice and wheat after bumper crops in recent years.

India had foodgrain stocks of 23.56 million tonnes last January, up from 23.52 million

tonnes in December and from 14.18 million tonnes in January 1993, a finance ministry report said last month.

A great revolution in the 1960s, through high-yield hybrid varieties of wheat and rice and mechanised farming techniques, propelled India to self-sufficiency in the following decade.

"So far India was never considered as an exporter of rice and wheat. We need to tell the international market that we have these foodgrains to be exported," Mr. Narayanan said.

Mr. Narayanan said Indian wheat was not competitive in the international market in terms of price, but its rice was.

Several rice exporting countries were not producing the varieties of superfine rice which India could supply. "There is a large potential for it," he said.

He said South East Asian countries and neighbours like Sri Lanka might be interested in Indian rice. Market analysis said the lifting of curbs on rice imports by Japan, Taiwan and South Korea also opened new markets.

Private traders in India are already exporting superfine basmati and non-basmati rice and superior varieties of wheat. In 1992/93 basmati rice exports were valued at 14 billion rupees (\$452 million).

TON

S. Africa probes pre-poll attacks

JOHANNESBURG (R) — Police said Saturday they were investigating a spate of attacks, including a possible white right-wing bombing of an oil pipeline, four days before South Africa's first all-race elections open.

With black and white leaders staging a final campaign push at the weekend, a blast ripped through a diesel pipeline in the Afrikaner heartland of the Orange Free State early Saturday after an earlier attack on an election office in the province.

"We are investigating an act of terrorism. It is definitely a charge of terrorism," police Colonel Andre Van Deventer told Reuters from the free state capital of Bloemfontein.

Police said they were also investigating an arson attack early Saturday that damaged the switchboard at a post office to be used as a polling station in the Northern Transvaal town of Nylstroom. They had initially reported an explosion.

An explosion Thursday badly damaged the offices of the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) in the conservative farming town of Hoopstad in the northern Orange Free State.

White rightwingers, who are boycotting the April 26-28 elections and demanding a homeland of their own, have threatened to sabotage the poll, which begins Tuesday and

will end over three centuries of white domination.

Col. Van Deventer said the possibility of a right-wing attack on the oil pipeline, 75 kilometres south of Johannesburg, was under investigation, "but we cannot confirm it at this stage." He said commercial explosives — a hallmark of the right wing — had apparently been used.

Security forces said they were deploying 100,000 police and soldiers to prepare for "any eventuality" during the poll for a National Assembly and nine provincial legislatures and a government of national unity.

African National Congress (ANC) supporters flocked to a soccer stadium in the sprawling Soweto township on the outskirts of Johannesburg to hear Nelson Mandela, president-in-waiting, in post-apartheid South Africa.

It was Mr. Mandela's last rally in the country's industrial and commercial hub. He winds up his campaign with a mass meeting on Sunday in Durban in the Zulu heartland of Natal.

"We are here to finally bury apartheid," said one ANC supporter on his way to the Soweto stadium. ANC spokesman said it would be Mr. Mandela's biggest rally in the Johannesburg region.

President F.W. de Klerk was winding up his campaign in Cape Town, while Zulu chief

Mangosuthu Buthelezi — leader of the Inkatha Freedom Party which only entered the elections last Tuesday — was in the Orange Free State.

Police blamed the white right for attacks earlier this year on power installations and offices of the ANC and its allies in Orange Free State and Transvaal.

The ANC, widely expected to win the polls, has told South Africans it will crack down on violence once in power.

The final days of the election campaign have been marked by political broadsides and fears of more conflict in a country where 15,000 people have died in political violence since President De Klerk began dismantling apartheid in 1990.

Police said two people died in overnight political violence in Natal, where a state of emergency is in force.

Mr. Buthelezi Friday raised prospects of new tension with the ANC, saying his Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) would boycott a government of national unity after the election. "The IFP will win enough votes to take its place in a government of national unity but we will not become part of the government," he told a rally.

An ANC statement called on security forces to act toughly against right-wing sabotage

and intimidation, adding: "Our historic first-ever right to vote is not going to be easily given up, not even in the face of this blackmail. Too much blood has been spilt in order to make this election possible."

Meanwhile, U.S. President Bill Clinton Friday named civil rights leader Jesse Jackson to lead the official U.S. delegation to observe South Africa's first all-race elections.

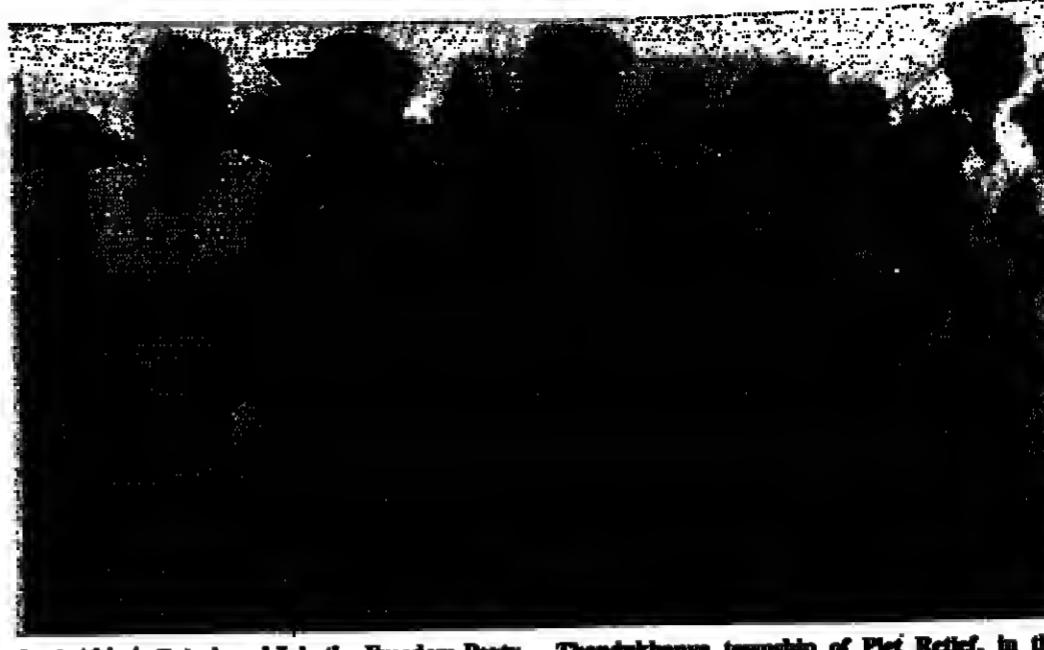
Mr. Clinton praised Rev. Jackson's leadership and commitment to democratic reform in South Africa.

The world is elated at the prospect of these elections. They are the next step in South Africa's historic path from apartheid to non-racial democracy," Mr. Clinton said.

"Americans have stood by South Africans in their struggle, and we will be steadfast in our commitment to work with all South Africans to build the prosperous, stable and just society that can come in its place," he said.

The delegation was expected to depart for South Africa Saturday and will remain there through the end of the elections.

White House spokeswoman Dee Dee Myers said it will have official observer status with the South African Independent Electoral Commission and will observe the polling throughout the country.



South Africa's Zulu-based Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) supporters form a barrier with their shields and chant slogans at an election rally in Thandaqasaya township of Pietermaritzburg, Eastern Transvaal (AFP photo).

U.N. troops scramble out of Rwanda

NAIROBI (R) — U.N. peacekeepers scrambled out of chaotic Rwanda where, amid the bloodshed, aid agencies struggled to get food and emergency medicines to thousands of people fleeing civil war.

A United Nations spokesman said 1,000 peacekeepers would leave the chaotic Central African state by Saturday night.

Their departure leaves about 600 U.N. soldiers who will be reduced within days to the 270 mandated by the Security Council, a spokesman for the U.N. Assistance Mission in Rwanda (UNAMIR) told Reuters in Nairobi by telephone from Kigali.

Critics of the pullout, such as the Organisation of African Unity and humanitarians groups, say the U.N. is abandoning the thousands of Rwandans it was guarding around a country where tens of thousands have already been attacked.

He did not say whether the guarantees were given. But he had no word that emergency aid supplies had reached the city.

In Washington, the White House called on the warring sides to agree to an immediate ceasefire and said it was prepared to help efforts to arrange a political settlement of their dispute.

"We call on the Rwandan army and the Rwandan Patriotic Front to agree on an immediate ceasefire and return to negotiations called for and facilitated by the government

of Tanzania," a White House statement said Friday.

It added that Washington was "prepared to participate, as in the past, in renewed negotiations in the context of the Arusha agreement of Aug. 4, 1993. That agreement called for a negotiated settlement and power-sharing between rival groups.

U.N. special representative Jacques-Roger Booh Booh was heading the U.N. mediation team in the northern Tanzanian town of Arusha where the Rwandan foes were due to meet later Saturday for peace talks.

The mass killing, mainly pitting the majority Hutu tribe against the minority Tutsi, started 17 days ago when a plane carrying the Rwandan and Burundian presidents was shot down by a rocket as they were about to land in Kigali.

At the United Nations in New York, a spokesman for Secretary-General Boutros Ghali said Friday the U.N. chief would have preferred a beefed-up U.N. operation in Rwanda but realised the Security Council felt differently.

The council voted late Thursday to cut the beleaguered force, once 2,500-strong, to about 270 to help negotiate a truce in the civil war.

Love story steals all hearts at film awards

HONG KONG (AFP) — "C'est La Vie, Mon Cheri," an old-fashioned, tear-jerking love story that was the surprise hit of Hong Kong's prolific movie industry, swept the 13th annual Hong Kong Film Awards, winning Best Picture and six other awards. "Maybe I have more friends among the judges this year," director Derek Yee quipped at the gala televised awards ceremony in the Hong Kong Cultural Centre. Based on a successful stage play, "C'est La Vie, Mon Cheri" broke ranks with the local film industry's vogue for historical Chinese kung fu action features with a sad, romantic tale of a doomed love between a handsome young jazz musician and his girlfriend dying of cancer. Anita Yuen, 22, the pixie Miss Hong Kong of 1990 who only last year won the Best New Performer Award, collected the Best Actress Award for her role in a film whose Chinese title literally translates as "The New Endless Love." Yee was summoned to the stage three times to collect for Best picture, Best Director and Best Screenplay — leaving him in danger of running out of people to thank after expressing appreciation to everyone from his mother to Emcee John Shan. Missing out on the laurels was the film's leading man, Hong Kong's latest heart-throb Lau Ching-Wan, who lost the Best Actor trophy to Anthony Wong for his role as a psychotic cannibal killer in one of the year's most gruesome films, "The Untold Story." The Bride With White Hair, one of several extravagant costume dramas set in ancient China on the nominations list, trailed C'est La Vie, Mon Cheri with three awards.

Painting stolen in Australia found in Skopje

SKOPJE (AFP) — A painting by the Czech artist Oskar Kokoschka, stolen in Australia several years ago, has been found in Skopje, Macedonian Interior Minister Ljubomir Frckovski said. Mr. Frckovski presented the still life work in oils to the press. The painting stolen with seven others from Australia's National Gallery in the 1980s is estimated to be worth between \$250,000 and \$300,000. The thieves are Macedonian-born Australians who were caught trying to sell the painting in Skopje, Mr. Frckovski said. The painting was undamaged but had been cut from its frame with a scalpel.

Medicine shops to get rid of tiger remedies

HONG KONG (R) — Hong Kong's Chinese medicine shops have one week to dispose of all stocks containing tiger products, which have been banned in the territory, the government said Friday. Tiger parts are prized in Asia for their supposed medicinal properties.

A three-month grace period allowing Hong Kong shops to dispose of all remaining tiger products expires next Friday. The ban was implemented to bring Hong Kong in line with Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) specifications. Medicines containing rhinoceros parts have been banned in the territory since 1989. About 90 per cent of the territory's Chinese medicine shops have been inspected by the Agriculture and Fisheries Department over the past six months, said the department's assistant director, Frank Lau.

Pizza man goes door-to-door naked

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — A man claiming to be a pizza deliveryman wore nothing more than a baseball cap as he went door-to-door at an apartment complex. Chad Abrams, 21, was arrested and jailed on charges of public indecency and public intoxication. Mr. Abrams injured himself in the groin while jumping over a fence as he allegedly tried to flee from sheriff's deputies. Sheriff's officials said he was not a pizza deliveryman. They were uncertain whether he was actually carrying a pizza. "Spring always brings this stuff out," dispatch supervisor Linda Wyland said. "You always get these guys trying to show off what they have."

Japan's Hata seen handicapped by cracking allies

TOKYO (R) — Japanese Foreign Minister Tsutomu Hata, set to take over as prime minister Monday, is likely to have his leadership severely cramped by the fissures in his coalition, political analysts said Saturday.

Mr. Hata made it clear during a Friday news conference that he did not have any illusions about his task.

"I've decided to accept the terrifying responsibilities that come with leading the nation," he said, adding: "I don't think the coalition is badly split."

Mr. Hata, 58, nominated as the alliance's candidate for a Monday vote in parliament that will put the final stamp on a successor to Morihiro Hosokawa, can only expect further political turmoil, the analysts said.

"With the present coalition framework, we can't expect strong leadership from Mr. Hata," said Takamitsu Sawa of Kyoto University.

Mr. Hosokawa's surprise resignation on April 8 sparked a fierce power struggle and two weeks of policy wrangling between the mainstream conservatives and the leftist Socialists, who are the biggest party in the coalition.

With the nation clearly wearying of the bickering, the two feuding sides agreed early Friday to a last-ditch policy platform that watered down the two most contentious issues — reform of the tax system and policy towards North Korea.

The Socialists had refused to give in to their alliance partners on a proposed hike in a three per cent value-added tax and possible United Nations-mandated sanctions against North Korea over its suspected nuclear arms programme.

"It is difficult for the new government with the achilles' heel of policy differences to remain stable for a long time," Mr. Sawa said.

In a Saturday editorial, the mass-circulation Mainichi Shimbun criticised the coalition for settling the policy dispute with a vaguely worded agreement.

"The absence of a clear and definite agreement on key national policies could be fatal to the government," the newspaper said.

Political pundits said the coalition could plunge into another round of internal feuds around June, when the government tries to thrash out a tax reform package and market-opening measures.

Those steps have been held out by Japan as a sop to the United States after trade talks between the world's two biggest economies broke down in February.

Cuts in direct taxation, such as income tax, form the core of the promised package.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Bossi backs Berlusconi for premier

ROME (AFP) — Media magnate Silvio Berlusconi stepped closer to becoming Italian prime minister Saturday when Northern League leader Umberto Bossi recommended his appointment in talks with President Oscar Luigi Scalfaro. Under Italy's constitution, Mr. Scalfaro must hold talks with the leader of political groups and the speakers of the two houses of parliament, before he can recommend who should succeed Carlo Azeglio Ciampi as prime minister on April 16. These talks began Friday and are expected to continue until Tuesday. Mr. Bossi said after meeting Mr. Scalfaro that there needed to be controls on Mr. Berlusconi's power. The Northern League needed to have ministers in key positions, he said. The Northern League, Mr. Berlusconi's Forza Italia and the neo-fascist National Alliance together from the Freedom Alliance, which swept to victory in elections held on March 27 and 28. Mr. Bossi said he had told Mr. Scalfaro Mr. Berlusconi was the only person who could command sufficient parliamentary support to become prime minister and form a government. He added, however, that there was a "fundamental problem of guarantees," given Mr. Berlusconi's "economic power" and his "multiple economic interests."

Bomb blast kills 2 in Thailand

BANGKOK (AFP) — A powerful bomb tore through a railroad station in Thailand's troubled south at midday Saturday as passengers waited for a train, killing two and injuring 30. An emergency room doctor at Maharat Hospital in the provincial capital of Nakhon Si Thammarat, some 780 kilometers from Bangkok, said two of the injured were children. Reached by telephone from Bangkok, the doctor said the dead were a man and a woman. Of the injured, six needed surgery to amputate mangled limbs, said the doctor, speaking on condition of anonymity. One man lost part of a leg in the blast and the others suffered broken legs, while three people were hemorrhaging. The doctor confirmed the bomb had exploded on the crowded platform of the railway station.

Accord on Volkstaat signed in Pretoria

PRETORIA (R) — The party representing South Africa's white right in next week's elections signed an accord with the ANC and government Saturday promising a fresh look at the idea of a Volkstaat or white homeland after the poll. "This document might be imperfect, but it's a demonstration of a desire to reconcile... the two major indigenous groups of this country," Constand Viljoen, the former armed forces chief who leads the Freedom Front, said after signing the accord. The deal, signed in Pretoria, pledges constitutional provision for any community sharing a common cultural and linguistic heritage — such as the Afrikaner descendants of the first Europeans to settle in South Africa. "Support for the ideal of self-determination in a Volkstaat will be indicated by the electoral support which parties with a specific mandate to pursue the realisation of a Volkstaat will gain in the forthcoming election," the accord said. It pledged further negotiations on setting up a Volkstaat if South Africa's constitutional court ruled that the April 26-28 elections showed there was support for the idea. Votes would be analysed at national, provincial and where possible local level.

S. Korea's Kim to shake-up cabinet

SEOUL (R) — South Korean President Kim Young-Sam is likely to revamp his cabinet next week after the National Assembly approves his pick of a senior strategist for Korean reunification as premier, aides said Saturday. Mr. Kim named Lee Yung-Dug Friday to replace Lee Hoi-Chang, who quit earlier in the day as prime minister in a shock eruption of differences over the scope of prime ministerial power. Mr. Lee Hoi-Chang's resignation revealed a heretofore hidden rift in the leadership of Mr. Kim's civilian government, currently under pressure from Communist North Korea over Pyongyang's alleged development of nuclear arms. "President Kim will fill the post of deputy premier and is likely to reshuffle a number of cabinet posts next week," a presidential aide said.

On Monday, the parliament, dominated by Mr. Kim's ruling Democratic Liberal Party, is expected to endorse Mr. Lee Yung-Dug as prime minister, though opposition parties have vowed to vote against him.

Haitians allowed to land in U.S.

MIAMI, Florida (AFP) — A boatload of Haitian refugees stepped onto U.S. soil with everything they owned Friday in a break with the usual U.S. policy of repatriating all boat people from the poverty-stricken country. The Coast Guard sailors who brought the 411 Haitians ashore wore rubber gloves when they unloaded the luggage as a precaution against disease. One woman was carried aboard on a litter and hooked up to an intravenous tube. The immigration and naturalization service began screening the refugees under makeshift shelters on tennis courts. They were intercepted Thursday on a crammed 20-metre (65-yards) wooden boat. The policy about-face came one day after deposed Haitian President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, in unusually harsh terms, condemned Mr. Clinton's Haiti policy as racist and six U.S. congressional critics were arrested for staging a sit-in front of the White House.

Cambodian parties agree to new peace talks

PHNOM PENH (R) — Long-stalled peace talks between the Cambodian government and Khmer Rouge guerrillas will get underway in May following a positive rebel response to a new olive-branch initiative by King Sihanouk.

King Sihanouk proposed a new round of reconciliation talks after the humiliating defeat of Cambodia's army by the guerrillas in Pailin in the west.

"In line with the profound proposal and aspirations of our entire nation and people, I, in the name of the Democratic Kampuchea Party (Khmer Rouge) would like to absolutely support the proposal of Your Majesty the King for a round-table meeting to achieve peace and national reconciliation," said nominal Khmer Rouge leader Chea Sim, who pledged to support the king's peace plan.

"We always follow Your Highness's shining example," Mr. Chea Sim said.

Meanwhile, Khmer Rouge guerrillas are thought to have ambushed a train killing at least five people and wounding 25, a senior Cambodian railway official said Saturday.

The attack occurred Thursday 140 kilometers northwest of Phnom Penh, said Prom Nan, director of the Cambodian State Railways.

The unidentified gunmen, who were believed to be Khmer Rouge guerrillas, detonated six mines planted on the railroad and opened fire at the train, killing five people on the spot before leaving the country, his mother said.

"Based on previous incidents, I believe it was the Khmer Rouge guerrillas who committed this crime," Mr. Nan said.

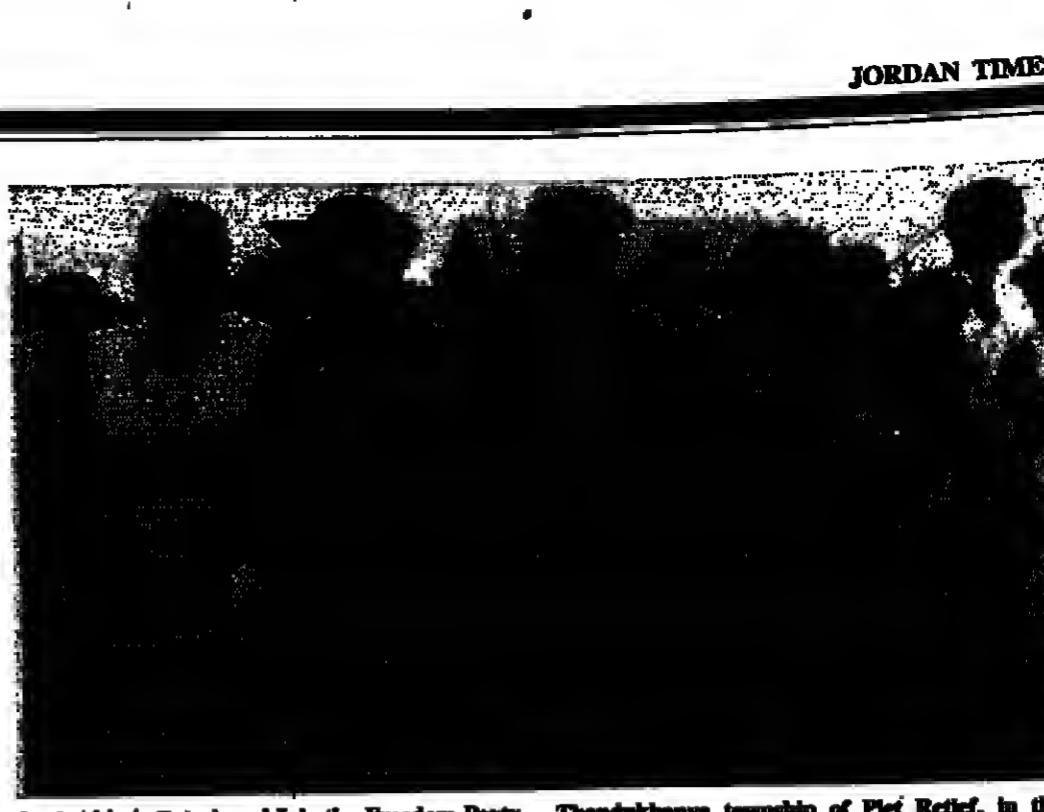
WASHINGTTON (R) — First lady Hillary Rodham Clinton, appearing poised and relaxed, said Friday she did nothing wrong in the Whitewater affair but admitted her inexperience and desire for privacy have made things worse.

In an unusual move for a first lady, the president's wife fielded questions for one hour and 10 minutes during a hastily called news conference in the State Dining Room of the White House.

Mrs. Clinton admitted that her initial opposition to a special prosecutor to investigate the case was a mistake that generated public doubts that she had something to hide.

"I think that is probably one of the things that I regret most and one of the reasons why I wanted to do this (press conference) because I've had to really do a lot of thinking the last couple of months," she said.

She called herself fortunate to be steered into a good opportunity by an old friend





NEWS IN BRIEF

Ski Paradise wins big Japan race

TOKYO (R) — Odds-on favourite Ski Paradise, ridden by Japan's top jockey Yutaka Take, surged to the front on the home stretch to score an impressive 1½ lengths win in the Keio-Hai Spring Cup run over 1.4 kilometres Saturday. It was the fifth victory in 13 starts for the four-year-old filly, who was running for the first time since she finished second in the Breeders' Cup Mile in Santa Anita last November. Ski Paradise earned prize money of \$582,000 out of the total purse of \$1.1 million.

French crew breaks sailing record

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — An avant-garde French sailboat skinned the waters below the Golden Gate Bridge Friday night, ending a record-breaking journey from New York to the San Francisco Bay. Isabelle Autissier, 37, and her crew piloted the Ecureuil Portou-Charentes 2 into the bay some two weeks faster than the old record, set in 1989. The craft followed the 13,945-mile (22,438 km) Cape Horn route once travelled by the famed clipper ships of the last century. The craft crossed the imaginary finish line in the bay at 8:32 p.m., 62 days, five hours and 55 minutes after leaving New York. The former record-holder, the Trimaran Great American, did not even reach the northern hemisphere until after its 60th day.

Chinese champion suspended for doping

TOKYO (R) — Chinese women's judo champion Tang Lihong was banned for two years Friday after testing positive for drugs during the Asian Championships in Macao last November, Kyodo news agency said. The suspension was announced at a technical committee meeting of the Judo Union of Asia (JUA) in Tokyo where officials said Tang was found to have taken a banned diuretic. Tang won the women's 48-KG division at the Asian Championships. Liu Yugi, an official of the Chinese Judo Association, denied Tang took a diuretic but said the athlete appeared to have taken some sort of medicine when she was admitted to hospital because of an illness before the championships, Kyodo said.

State Department clears Cuban trip

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colorado (AFP) — The U.S. State Department Friday intervened to allow shooting competitors from several countries to travel from the World Cup USA to Cuba for a World Cup event in Cuba next week. About 400 shooters from more than 60 countries are in Fort Benning, Georgia, for the American event. About 250 of them were to travel to Havana Sunday. The plans hit a snag when the State Department learned that Olympic-style competitors travel with their own weapons. U.S. regulations bar the export of firearms to Cuba. On Friday, after intervention by senators Sam Nunn and Ted Stevens, the State Department determined that the rule did not apply to the special target guns used in competition.

Cadalora takes pole in Japanese GP

SUZUKA, Japan (AFP) — Luca Cadalora starts Sunday's Japanese 500cc Grand Prix in pole position after steady rains during the final session Saturday left the lap record be set on Friday unbeaten. The Italian Yamaha rider, seeking his first win of the season, stormed to a new lap record of 2min 8.536secs on the 5.86 kilometre (3.64 mile) course on Friday to take top spot over rivals Michael Doohan and Kevin Schwantz. The rain started early Saturday, slowing down the pace and ensuring that none of the riders was able to better their Friday times.

Cameroon cancels friendly with Zambia

YAOUNDE (R) — Cameroon's chaotic preparations for this year's World Cup finals hit a new low Saturday when state radio announced the cancellation of Sunday's friendly match against Zambia. The radio gave no reasons for the last-minute decision. The warm-up match in Douala, Cameroon's economic capital, was organised by an obscure company called Audio Visual International Communication. Soccer journalists said the company was unable to raise the funds to bring Zambia, one of Africa's top teams, Cameroon's indomitable Lions were Africa's pride in the 1990 World Cup finals in Italy, reaching the quarter-finals.

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TANIA HIRSCH
Tribune Media Services, Inc.

WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ

Q.1—Both vulnerable, as South you hold:
AQ 5 4 3 2 ♠A K Q 8 7 6 5 ♠A B
The bidding has proceeded:
North East South West
1 ♠ Pass 1 ♠ Pass
2 ♠ Pass ?
What action do you take?
A.—The negative aspect of your holding is that the high cards are in the short suits. The plus factor is your secondary fit for partner's suit. We think the hand is just worth a game try and would issue the invitation by raising to three hearts.

Q.2—East-West vulnerable, as South you hold:
2 7 6 5 4 3 2 ♠A K Q 8 7 6 5 ♠A B
The bidding has proceeded:
North East South West
2 C* 3 ♠ Pass Pass
Dbl Pass ?
—Artificial game force
What action do you take?
A.—Considering your length in East's suit, partner's double is obviously for takeout and you are free to remove it if you desire. However, with this distribution you have no reason to believe that any contract your side might choose would be more rewarding than the penalty you might obtain, so pass. Your king of clubs could be worth a full trick on defense.

Q.3—East-West vulnerable, as South you hold:
4 3 2 ♠A K Q 8 7 6 5 ♠A B
The bidding has proceeded:
West North East South
2 ♠ 4 3 ♠ Pass ?
What action do you take?
A.—While the North hand does not have to be all that strong in defensive values, partner must have a very good heart suit. We think you can make a slam as long as you don't have two fast spade losers. The way to find out is to bid over.

Moorer dethrones Holyfield

LAS VEGAS (R) — Friday night's title fight may not have been about hooks and jabs as much as it was about Evander Holyfield showing that fighters can turn into old men in just 36 minutes.

Michael Moorer, 26, snatched Holyfield's World Boxing Association (WBA) and International Boxing Federation (IBF) heavyweight titles in a majority decision and turned it into a very creditable job, especially with his jarring right jab that vanquished the former champion all night.

But it was Holyfield's inability to get out of the way of the jab and his generally sloppy, dodging performance that made the job much easier. It seemed that the often tentative left-handed challenger could hit the 31-year-old Holyfield with his right jab anytime he wished.

Holyfield did manage to land combinations to the new champion's head and even knocked Moorer down in the second round. But Holyfield's legs — where the torque for the power is generated — seemed to be wanting to play shuffleboard instead.

Holyfield knocked down Moorer in the second round, but judge Jerry Roth saw it as a "flash" knockdown and scored the round even. If he had scored in 10-9 as the other judges had it, Holyfield would have won. The other judges scored the fight 114-114 and 116-112.

Moorer got up quickly and later said he had only been momentarily stunned, neither man was knocked down after that.

Michael Moorer poses with the IBF and WBA heavyweight title belts after defeating champion Evander Holyfield (AFP photo)

Moorer won the fifth round on all cards and he seemed to be gaining momentum as he hit Holyfield with a left uppercut jarring him into the ropes. The cut opened up shortly after that.

Moorer, now 35-0, also won the sixth round from the judges, and in the seventh round, he came back to land strong punches after being battered by a series of Holyfield's blows.

Moorer hurt Holyfield in the 12th round with a right hook and then immediately followed up to do more damage with his powerful jab. Holyfield slugged it out with Moorer until the bell, but Moorer was in no danger.

"Him being left-handed was a big problem, but I did train for it," Moorer said. "The cut made it difficult,

but Michael Moorer fought a great fight," Holyfield said.

Holyfield, now 30-2, also did not help his cause much by crucial decisions, dictated by a concern for money, he made outside the ring.

He switched to a new trainer — his third in four fights — and his third cut his cutman.

And, as luck would have it in this town built on losing gambles, Holyfield was cut and bothered by blood oozing into his eye throughout the fight.

His trainer, Don Turner, had said with little modesty, earlier in the week that "you gotta be a real idiot not to be able to talk and fix a cut at the same time."

Without trying to categorise his intelligence quotient, it was noted that the cut did not appear to be very deep and that it bled for several rounds.

In the final week action, Al Baqaa became the fourth team to be relegated alongside Al

Wihdat-Faisali.

Al Baqaa missed a penalty shot but Bilal Al Asi ended his team's scoring spree when he netted in the fourth goal in the 90th minute.

Al Baqaa's officials Saturday accused the rest of the teams of "unfair play by rigging matches," as the three other teams — Al Ramtan, Al Arabi and Al Qadisieh — all of whom were threatened by relegation — scored unexpected wins over their opponents.

Al Ramtan avoided relegation when they scored a crucial 2-1 victory over Al Ahli.

Mouaffaq Abu Hdeib opened scoring in the 20th minute, but Al Ahli's Bamous Ramadan equalised five minutes later.

Mahmoud Raja scored Al

Ramtha's winning goal in the 67th minute, saving his team from relegation to finish in eighth place.

Al Jazreh's Maher Majarich scored a stunning goal in the 5th minute, but Sabah equalised five minutes later. They took the lead after scoring their second goal in the 27th minute and the third goal in the 43rd minute. Al Jazreh's second goal came from a penalty shot in the 50th minute. But after their veteran striker Tawfiq Al Saheb was out with an injury, Sabah put on an all-out attack celebrating their lead and won.

Al Jazreh scored their third goal from a penalty kick in the 84th minute.

Al Arabi scored a 2-0 win over Al Hussein to finish in eighth place.

Al Hussein's Tadros won the striker award with 19 goals.

Sabah scored a 4-1 win over Al Jazreh who managed to stay in the first division in ninth place.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Saudi group says member's family pressured

NICOSIA (R) — A Saudi Arabian civil rights group said on Saturday that Saudi officials were putting pressure on the family of its London office head to make him return to the kingdom. "The Committee for the Defence of Legitimate Rights (CDLR) has learned that the Saudi authorities have started exercising pressures upon the family of Doctor Sa'ad Al Faqih," a CDLR statement said. "(This is) in order to persuade him to return to the kingdom and relinquish his role in the committee in exchange for what has been described as 'a royal pardon,'" it added. The statement, which was faxed to Reuters from London, said Dr. Faqih was the CDLR's London office director. It was signed by Dr. Faqih and CDLR spokesman Mohammad Al Masaari, a physics professor who the group says spent six months in detention in Saudi Arabia before coming to London.

Three hurt in Cairo gas blast

CAIRO (AFP) — An explosion in an empty house injured three passers-by in a crowded district of Cairo Saturday. The Interior Ministry said it was caused by a gas leak. Earlier, security officials had said a bomb had exploded in the house in Matareya and police were questioning a militant in connection with the blast. Witnesses told AFP gas installations had not been set up in the district in northern Cairo. Two militants were injured Thursday when five explosive devices they were planning to use in attacks accidentally blew up in a shop in the Ain Shams district of Cairo. The blast badly damaged the front of the shop, which was owned by one of the injured, a chemist. His cousin was also hurt.

Vietnamese pushed out of train in Germany

POTSDAM, Germany (R) — Unknown attackers apparently pushed a 33-year-old Vietnamese man out of a moving train in eastern Germany breaking both his ankles, police said Saturday. The man said he asked two Germans, whom he described as shaven-headed, about a stop on the journey. The men took away his ticket and pushed him out of the train between the towns of Ruhland and Hoyerswerda. For three years since unification, Germany has been dogged by racist violence, often carried out by young shaven-headed skinheads of neo-Nazis. This week six youths were charged in the northern town of Bielefeld with setting fire to a house inhabited by Turks.

Briton faces caning in Qatar

LONDON (AFP) — A Qatari court has sentenced a Briton to 50 strokes of the cane across the soles of his feet on conviction of illicit alcohol sales to a Muslim. The man's father said here Saturday. But Colonel Derek Sherrard-Smith charged that his computer programmer son Gavin "has been set up" by police. The 30-year-old Briton had been working with Qatari police for 18 months when he was arrested last November and charged with selling around a dozen bottles of alcohol to a Muslim colleague. An Islamic court sentenced him on Jan. 24 to 50 cane lashes and a six-month prison sentence, to be followed by expulsion from Qatar. Col. Sherrard-Smith said: "We fear that the physical and degrading punishment, ordered on very flimsy evidence, may well cause irreparable psychological harm." The meeting (between his son and the Muslim purchaser) took place, observed by the CID who claimed that money was given for the sale of alcohol. (But) only one eyewitness alleged he had seen the transaction, whereas the Holy Koran requires at least two."

Mashhad gunman tried to kill himself

TEHRAN (AFP) — A man who fired shots at a Muslim prayer leader in the holy city of Mashhad in northeastern Iran later tried to commit suicide, Iranian newspapers reported Saturday. The man, who shot and wounded Hojatoleslam Abai-Khorassani with a pistol during a religious service Friday, fired a bullet into his stomach before being overpowered by worshippers who handed him over to the security forces. Three shots were fired at Hojatoleslam Abai-Khorassani, hitting him in the neck and chest. He was rushed to hospital, where his condition was reported to be satisfactory. A stray bullet also injured a young religious scholar, the newspaper said. The gunman underwent surgery during which part of his intestines was removed. The motive for the attack, the first ever on a Muslim cleric leading Friday prayers in Iran, was not known. It took place at the Gobar-Shad mosque near the Imam Reza Mausoleum, one of Shiite Islam's holiest shrines.

Aid agency to be taken to court in Sudan

KHARTOUM (R) — A U.S.-based voluntary aid agency working in Sudan is to be taken to court for allegedly distributing spoiled food unfit for human consumption, a Khartoum newspaper reported on Saturday. The government-owned Al Ingaz Al Watani daily said Justice Minister and Attorney-General Abdul Aziz Sibdu issued a decision to prosecute the area development agency. In recent weeks Khartoum newspapers have carried several articles about an international voluntary organisation distributing and selling spoiled relief food but few details have emerged.

Rwandan rebels declare truce

ARUSHA, Tanzania (Agencies) — Rwandan rebels declared a unilateral ceasefire from midnight (2100 GMT) Monday ahead of peace talks which opened here late Saturday, but said it would only hold if the government agreed to end ethnic bloodletting.

A "unilateral declaration of ceasefire" signed by rebel Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF), leader Alexis Kanyarengwe and issued in this northern Tanzanian town blamed the massacres of tens of thousands of Rwandans on the "presidential guard, armed civilians and militias."

It called for a "cessation of hostilities" to get food and medicine to tens or possibly hundreds of thousands of displaced people and "bring this conflict to a peaceful settlement."

The death of President Juvenal Habyarimana in a mysterious April 6 plane crash triggered an ethnic bloodbath and rekindled the three-year civil war.

The rebel declaration said the ceasefire would be conditional on the government forces "controlling all killings and acts of violence in areas under their control within 96 hours of the coming into force of this declaration."

Another condition was that the government forces accept an international inquiry into the killings and allow those found responsible to be punished.

It also made the end of fighting dependent on the government forces agreeing to joint security patrols with the rebels to stop atrocities.

It also said the government must agree to joint control of the airport and safe corridors for humanitarian aid.

U.N. envoy Jacques-Roger Booth-Booh said U.N. peacekeepers evacuated from Rwanda may return if the talks here lead to a ceasefire.

"I have been authorised by (U.N.) Secretary-General Boutros Ghali to keep 1,000 troops in Nairobi so that if we get a ceasefire they can be brought back quickly," Mr. Booth-Booh said.

The U.N. envoy arrived

here on Friday for talks between the RPF and the interim government aimed at ending the bloodletting that has cost tens of thousands of lives.

The talks, chaired by Tanzanian Prime Minister John Malecela, were due to open at 6 p.m. (1500 GMT).

But many delegates had not arrived by mid-afternoon.

The government delegation, led by Interior Minister Faustin Munyazesa and including at least two top military officers, was flying here from the eastern Zairean town of Goma, diplomats said.

The interim government formed after the president's death drove to Zaire from the southern Rwandan town of Gitarama, where its members fled from Kigali nearly two weeks ago as tribal killings engulfed the capital.

Also expected here later Saturday was Organisation of African Unity Secretary General Salim Ahmad Salim, who expressed outrage at the United Nations' decision to withdraw almost all its peacekeepers from Rwanda.

Agencies also condemned the pullout of about 1,000 peacekeepers which they said left Rwandan civilians unprotected.

"U.N. spokesman Moctar Gueye said about 12,000 Rwandans were under U.N. protection in Kigali, including about 5,000 displaced people in a sports stadium where 40 civilians were killed Tuesday by government shells.

Mr. Gueye said another 100 people had been wounded, about half of whom "will probably not survive."

Mr. Booth-Booh said most of the peacekeepers had arrived in Nairobi from Kigali, leaving only a skeleton force of about 300 U.N. soldiers who are to stay in the Rwandan capital.

Their original mission was to monitor a ceasefire between the rebels, mostly from the minority Tutsi tribe, and the government forces, drawn mainly from the majority Hutus.

The two sides signed Tanzanian-mediated peace accords in Arusha last August.

Gulf Arabs wary of U.S. call for democracy

RIYADH (AFP) — Gulf Arab states have reservations about a U.S. document calling on them to encourage pluralism and democracy as the basis of future relations in the Middle East, Arab diplomats said here Saturday.

The document, presented to the six-member Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) in Fehmura, said the United States wanted to see participants in the multilateral Middle East peace talks "encourage individual and collective freedoms and pursue democracy and pluralism."

It said relations between states in the region should be based on such concepts in the future.

Foreign ministry officials from GCC members Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain and Oman met in Riyadh Saturday to discuss the document. They had "reservations" about the proposals, the diplomats said.

The ministry officials were to coordinate their positions on the document and review their participation in the multilateral talks, launched at the Madrid peace conference in 1991.

Of the six GCC states only Kuwait has an elected parliament with various political groups represented.

The other five have specially-appointed consultative assemblies.

On Tuesday the multilateral working group on water resources — one of five set up in Madrid — ended talks in Oman with agreements on five projects to boost scarce water supplies and establish Israeli-Arab cooperation.

The talks were attended by an Israeli delegation, visiting a Gulf Arab country for the first time ever.

Qatar is due to host a meeting of the working group on disarmament from May 2 to 5.

The other three groups deal with economic cooperation, refugees and the environment.

"We will do what we can while we're in the region to lay a stronger substantive basis for progress on all the tracks so that when the negotiations resume here in Washington following the secretary's trip they'll be in a position to advance the dialogue even further," the spokesman said.

"...The secretary feels that it's very important to demonstrate the United States is staying the course on our policy with respect to Iraq, that both our humanitarian efforts in northern Iraq and our effort to contain Saddam Hussein's aggression need to be underscored and need to be made clear," Mr. McCurry said, adding "I think a lot of his discussions while in the region will focus on that aspect of our policy."

Mr. Christopher will fly first to London to meet April 25 with British Prime Minister Major and Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd. While in London, the secretary will also meet with King Hussein.

Mr. Christopher plans to

proceed to Riyadh April 26, where he will discuss a wide range of topics with King Fahd of Saudi Arabia. Items on the agenda include Iraq and security in the Gulf, the peace process and bilateral commercial relations. Mr. McCurry said.

He will fly to Cairo for meetings with President Hosni Mubarak and the Egyptian leadership, probably on April 27, Mr. McCurry said. The secretary also plans to visit Israel and Syria, but because leaders in the region are also travelling, Mr. Christopher's schedule remains uncertain.

A senior administration official explained that one objective of Mr. Christopher's trip is to use his presence "to help the Israelis and Palestinians maintain what is clearly an accelerated process that is underway right now" to try to come to closure on agreement to implement their September declaration of principles "much more rapidly than originally was conceived."

The senior official said it is important for the secretary to be able to see Middle East leaders in advance of the four-track Washington negotiations, which are now expected to resume in early May. Mr. Christopher will encourage the leaders to issue to their negotiators "the kinds of instructions that can enhance the prospect of progress," the official said.

"Whenever you're having negotiations it's always best to have the political leaders engaged and it's best done at the secretary's level," he said.

Mr. McCurry noted that the parties are real."

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Asked about the Israeli-PLO talks, the senior official noted that "they seem now to have resolved the issue on the transfer of authority from the civil administration to the Palestinians," and added, "They made further headway on some of the outstanding security questions that were still open... I think they've made headway both in terms of

Accord on army move eludes Yemen cabinet

SANA (R) — Yemen's cabinet failed to decide on Saturday how to move rival army units from potential flashpoints, one of the issues threatening national unity.

Political sources said the cabinet met only briefly over the plan to move army units away from areas near what was the border before North and South Yemen merged into a single country four years ago.

A new cabinet meeting was set for May 2.

Yemen's armed forces are still to be fully integrated.

A brief statement by Sanaa Radio on the meeting made no mention of the military item, nor did it say what was discussed.

Defence Minister Haitham Oasseem Taher, a southerner, failed to attend the meeting in the capital Sanaa, the source said.

Mr. Taher, a member of the Yemen Socialist Party (YSP) of estranged Vice-President Ali Salem Al Beidi, has been boycotting cabinet meeting in Sanaa for five months.

The YSP said on Thursday two infantry battalions, 10 tanks and four Katuha-mounted vehicles were moved

to areas along the former border.

"There were no weapons or military equipment on the helicopters. There were also no troop reinforcements," a YSP official source said.

"The (southern) 20th brigade is cutting supply routes to the (northern) Amaligh Brigade," the source added.

Differences arose between Mr. Saleh and Mr. Beidi in August, paralysing the government and sparking military clashes. The crisis threatens to divide Yemen.

The GPC denied on Friday it had rushed tanks and arms to loyal troops in the south and accused Aden of cutting supply routes to northern forces.

The GPC was responding to a YSP charge that northern rivals were rushing seven helicopters loaded with weapons, military equipment and soldiers to the Amaligh Brigade.

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drafting (texts) and in terms of dealing with the resolution of some of these issues."

The senior official suggested more attention is being given to the Syrian track of the bilateral negotiations "because there is a sense on the Israeli side that they are close to closure with the Palestinians on the implementation agreement and how the implementation will go forward." Recent statements by Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin have been "quite serious and quite significant," the official said.

He said it seems clear that the Israelis are developing a set of ideas that are designed to deal with the outstanding issues of peace, security, and withdrawal and how they fit together.

"We'll have a discussion not only about their ideas but how best to convey ideas and how best to use that conveyance to promote the process," the senior official said, noting "there is seriousness on each side, but the gaps that separate the parties are real."

This trip "has to be seen in terms of setting the stage for trying to push ahead," the official said, emphasising the need to be realistic. "There is a lot of work to be done. I don't see breakthroughs being imminent. But I think," he said, "you constantly are trying to see if you can create new baseline from which to work."

The high-level dialogue established by President Clinton and Syrian President Assad "has clearly been important in terms of sustaining the peace process," the official said.

"The fact is he and Syria are a critical part of this overall process. I think when Prime Minister Rabin was here, one of the things he said was that he saw Syria as being the key to a comprehensive settlement. That's a view that we've had, but he said it was as well. So if one wants to pursue peace, this is clearly a critical partner," the official said.

By Mariam M. Shahin
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

THOUSANDS OF Palestinian policemen, deportees and Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) bureaucrats in Amman, Tunis, Cairo and elsewhere in the Arab World are awaiting word on their return to the occupied territories.

Ever since PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin shook hands on the White House lawn on Sept. 13, thousands of the Palestinians who expect to be among the first to return to help implement Palestinian self-rule in the occupied territories once self-rule begins have been glued to their radios, telephones and fax machines — on "stand-by," awaiting news "any moment" of their long yearned-for return to the homeland.

Delays after delays in the implementation of the declaration of principles has created frustration and discontent among all, but hope is by no means gone. Israel is a

negotiating partner and has veto power over "every name" or so Palestinian policemen, deportees and PLO bureaucrats believe. While PLO negotiators say that they will decide who enters Palestinian lands and that these are open to all Palestinians, Israel has reserved the right to veto any person they feel they do not want in the occupied territories.

Brigadier Mohammad Qudsiel, head of the Palestinian police force in Jordan, sits in his Jabal Hussein-based headquarters every morning drinking tea with his colonels and lieutenants.

"We are ready to move at any time," says Brig. Qudsiel, who heads the prestigious Badr Brigades, a force of some 3,200 members of the Palestine Liberation Army (PLA).

A total of 7,000 PLA fighters based in Jordan, Yemen, Egypt, Iraq, Sudan and Algeria are expected to return to the occupied territories as policemen once the final implementation agreement is signed by Palestinian

negotiators in Cairo.

"We have been ready since Dec. 13," says Brig. Qudsiel referring to the date initially agreed upon for the first phase of Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and Jericho.

But during the last trip by Mr. Arafat to Jordan, Brig. Qudsiel apparently got no instructions to "get ready" or be "on stand-by" from his commander-in-chief.

Brig. Qudsiel, like most PLA members, is not a native of the West Bank or Gaza but a refugee from the parts of Palestine that became Israel in 1948. He left the occupied territories in the 1967 war.

Brig. Qudsiel and his lieutenants have made lists of supplies and equipment that they will need once they settle in Jericho. Among the first PLA batch to go will be doctors and engineers, PLA officials say.

Knowing that Palestinian deportees with a military background would be the last that Israel would allow to return, she lives with the hope that the Sept. 13 Oslo accords will allow for her return by the time Palestinian self-rule begins.

PLO officials have not promised her much except that once Mr. Arafat returns she would be among the odd

500 administrators expected to return with him.

"About 400-500 administrators will be accompanying the leadership upon its return to the occupied territories," said a senior FIDA official in Amman this week. Ms. Odeh will probably be among this group.

Salah Tamari, a senior member of Fatah's Revolutionary Council, recently came to Jordan after a six-year stay in the United States, where he organised youth camps for Palestinian-Americans.

Sitting in his home office in Jabal Hussein he receives phone calls after phone calls from Palestinian officials and relatives in